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THE LIFE AND LETTERS

OF

ADMIRAL SIR CHARLES NAPIER, K.C.B.

Dessiné d'après nature
par F. Lepaulle

Th. Jefferson

The Life and Letters of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B. : *By H. Noel Williams*

Author of "Five Fair Sisters," etc., etc. :: :: ::

WITH 25 ILLUSTRATIONS, INCLUDING PHOTOGRAVURE FRONTISPIECE

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MRS. H. JODRELL.
(Countess Napier St. Vincent),
Only Child of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.

THIS BOOK HAS BEEN WRITTEN FOR YOU,
MY SWEET MOTHER.
TO CARRY OUT THE GREAT WISH OF YOUR HEART

M. C. Gooch

June 11, 1917

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1, Great Cumberland Place,
London, W.

DEAR MRS. GOOCH,

Thank you for your letter of the 2nd instant. I am so pleased you were interested in reading my Memoirs. No man has ever been treated worse by the politicians than Admiral Sir Charles Napier. He was a splendid seaman, and affords one of the instances where the politicians are always doing their best to lose the Empire, and the Navy and Army save it at the critical moment.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES BERESFORD.

4th November, 1914.

The Life and Letters of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.

CHAPTER I

SCHOOLBOY AND MIDSHIPMAN

THE ancient and celebrated Scottish family of Napier of Merchistoun has ever been prolific in soldiers, many of whom have attained high distinction; indeed, if tradition is to be believed, the very name of "nae peer," having no peer or equal, was earned on the field of battle at a remote period of history;* while the family motto, "Ready, ay ready," was granted by James V. to one of the Napiers, who, amidst a general desertion of that monarch by his barons, faithfully followed his sovereign with a "plump of spears" in a foray over the border.

> "And hence in fair remembrance worn,
> Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne;
> Hence his high motto shines reveal'd,
> 'READY, AYE READY' for the field." †

The Navy, on the other hand, does not appear to have had much attraction for the Napiers, since few of them have adopted

* "The noble family of the Napiers," says an old chronicle, "traces its ancestral descent from the ancient Earls of Lennox, who became so created in the early reign of Malcolm III., 1057, taking on them the name of Napier from the following occurrence:

"King David II., in order to sustain his wars against the English, convoked his subjects to battle. Hereupon the Earl of Lennox sent Donald, his second son, with such forces as his duty obliged him. Shortly afterwards, coming to an engagement, wherein his Scots gave ground, this Donald, beholding his father's standard quail to the ground, snatched it from its coward bearer, and valiantly encountered the enemy with the Lennox men, so that the fortune of the battle bore reverse, and Donald gained high victory. It was then the custom among warriors, after the achievements of a battle, to advance forward before the throne of the King, and each to report his acts. So did all and so did Donald; whereupon the King made royal declaration that all had valiantly done, but there stood one among them that had *na peer* (no peer or equal). From that day Donald took upon himself the honourable name of Napier; holding also, in reward of his good services, the lands of Gosfield and other estates in the county of Fife."

† Scott: "Lay of the Last Minstrel."

that profession. Nevertheless, the family may fairly claim to have rendered distinguished services to their country by sea as well as on land, since among these few occurs the name of one of the greatest British seamen of the nineteenth century.

Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B., was the second son of Captain the Hon. Charles Napier, R.N., and grandson of Francis, fifth Baron Napier, and was born at Merchistoun Hall, near Falkirk, on March 6, 1786. His mother was a daughter of Gabriel Hamilton, of Westburn, Lanarkshire, and he was one of six children: three sons and three daughters. Francis, the eldest of the boys, born in 1778, subsequently received a civil appointment in the East India Company's service and died at Madras in 1798. The youngest, Thomas Erskine, born in 1790, entered the Army as an ensign in the 52nd Light Infantry when he was only fifteen, and from that early age until the peace of 1814 was almost continuously on active service. He served with the 52nd at Copenhagen in 1807; was aide-de-camp to Sir John Hope during the expedition to Sweden in 1808, and afterwards served at Coruña and in Portugal. On October 27, 1809, he was promoted to be captain in the Chasseurs Britanniques, a corps of foreigners in British pay, with which he served in Sicily, at Fuentes d'Onôro, at the defence of Cadiz, and in Spain, 1812–13. When, in 1813, Sir John Hope joined the Peninsular Army, Thomas Napier resumed his position of aide-de-camp, and during the fighting on the Nive in December of that year lost his left arm. He became a major-general in 1846, and was general officer commanding the troops in Scotland and governor of Edinburgh Castle from May, 1852 until his promotion to lieutenant-general in June, 1854. In the latter year he was appointed colonel of the 16th Foot, but in 1857 was transferred to the 71st Highland Light Infantry. In 1860 he was created K.C.B., and became a full general in the following year. He died on July 5, 1863, at the age of seventy-three. Of the three daughters, the eldest, Henrietta, married George Gordon, of Hallhead, Aberdeenshire, and the youngest, Christian, Charles Campbell, of Crombie. The second, Agnes, died unmarried.

Charles Napier's early education appears to have been entrusted to a clergyman of the Established Church of Scotland, the Rev. William McCall, who is described as a worthy man, full of fun and good humour, and who, while instructing his pupil in the

FRANCIS, 5th BARON NAPIER,
Grandfather of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.

[To face p. 2.

LADY HENRIETTA HOPE,
Wife of Francis, 5th Baron Napier, and grandmother of Admiral Sir Charles Napier.

[To face p. 3

rudiments of Latin, assisted Mrs. Napier in the management of her farm. At the age of seven, however, Charles was sent to the High School at Edinburgh, which at that time consisted of some six hundred boys. For six successive winters he attended during the day the classes at the High School, living in his father's town house in George's Square, and assisted in pursuing his studies at home by his tutor, Mr. McCall.

In school he appears to have been a well-behaved boy and very attentive to his studies, as we might expect from one who throughout life was always eager for information on all manner of subjects. On one occasion he succeeded in obtaining the coveted position of " Don," or head of his class, and so proud was he of this distinction that, in honour of the event, he ordered a sedan-chair, a mode of conveyance much used by ladies in those days, and had himself carried home in triumph to George's Square.

Out of school, he showed himself to be a lad of a bold and energetic character, full of pluck and daring and always ready to take the lead in every schoolboy frolic. In the frequent " bickerings " which took place between the High School boys and the rabble of the town of Edinburgh, he was generally to the fore, and, as in after years upon the sea, the greater the odds against him, the better he seemed to be pleased.

" To me," wrote an old schoolfellow of his, " there is magic in the name of Charles Napier. It brings fresh before me the ' days o' lang syne,' the days of the High School, George's Square, its games, its laddies and its bickers. In these Charlie was one of our most conspicuous leaders ; always at his post, ever in the van against any odds of butcher and baker lads (our great enemies), ever ready to take up the quarrel of a little chap who might be bullied by a big one. Often did he in such ' battles interpose,' and often did he ' wipe a bloody nose.' " *

During these schoolboy days Charles Napier's chief companions of his own age were his cousins, the young Hamiltons Dundas of Duddingstone, where likewise resided his maternal grandmother, the " Lady Westburn," as she was commonly called. Among his contemporaries at the High School were two younger brothers of Lord Brougham, Thomas Erskine, and the Cockburns, one of whom was afterwards the Scottish judge.

* Cited by Major-General Elers Napier in " Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.," vol. I., p. 4.

ADMIRAL SIR CHARLES NAPIER, K.C.B.

From infancy Charles Napier showed the keenest interest in boats and ships, and it was his great delight to watch the barges plying to and fro along a canal which ran at the foot of the garden at Merchistoun. It is related that, on one occasion, his nurse having placed him on the bank of the canal to look at a barge which was passing by, one of the men cried out that he was "a bonnie bairn and a true built sailor to boot."

When he grew a little older, he was continually building and rigging boats and ships, which he used to sail on the canal and on a large pond in the grounds at Merchistoun Hall; while his holidays and leisure hours when at Edinburgh were usually spent among the shipping at Leith, where he would examine with admiring eyes every vessel in the harbour. His father, Captain Napier, who had experienced many disappointments and vexations in the course of his own professional career, was strongly opposed to the passionate desire which the lad expressed to enter the Navy. But Charles's mind was bent on this object, and eventually he succeeded, with the assistance of his schoolfellows, in removing the parental opposition. The incident is amusingly related by one of them, Mr. Ainslie, in his "Recollections of a Scottish Gentleman":

"Amongst the favourite companions of my boyhood was Charlie Napier, whose ardent wish to enter the Navy was decidedly opposed by his father (a retired post-captain). This interference with Charlie's wishes was considered by us aspiring youngsters as a tyrannical stretch of parental authority, and we accordingly determined to accompany Charlie to his father's house, and endeavour, by our persuasive eloquence, to move the gallant captain from his resolution. I well recollect the awe we experienced when we reached George's Square, and were about to be ushered into the presence of the captain (for, like Bob Acres, our bold resolve to face him had 'oozed out' as we trudged along). On entering the library of Captain Napier, our fears and alarm did not diminish as he looked with most stern surprise at the liberty we had taken by thus invading his sanctum. At last, Charlie lifted up his voice and reiterated his wish to don the middy's uniform—when we took courage and urged in tremulous tones in support of his petition. But it was in vain, and we were dismissed in no very courteous tones by the gallant veteran, who declared, in decided language, 'that Charlie should never enter the Navy.' How this seeming most positive determination came to be altered I know not. But, in a very brief after-period, Charlie announced to us, with unbounded joy, that his father had at last consented to his wishes."

At this time, the *Martin*, a sloop of war, commanded by Captain the Hon. Matthew Sinclair, a younger brother of Lord Sinclair, happened to be refitting in the dock at Leith, and it was arranged that Charles should join this vessel as a first-class volunteer. Lord Brougham's youngest brother John was also rated as a midshipman on board. The *Martin* sailed from Leith Roads in November, 1799, and, after cruising in the North Sea, came to anchor in Yarmouth Roads, when John Brougham, disgusted with a sailor's life, left her. Soon afterwards, Charles Napier was appointed to the *Renown*, a new ship of 74 guns, commanded by Captain Eyles, and bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren, then lying at Spithead, and set out for London, where he was to make some stay before joining his ship. His removal from the *Martin* was a most providential circumstance for him, as in October, 1800, that vessel mysteriously disappeared, and is believed to have foundered in the North Sea with all hands. Anyway, nothing was ever heard of her again.

In London, Charles stayed at the house of a relative, the father of Mark Napier, the historian, who, after showing the youngster all the sights of London, took him to see the lions which were then kept at the Tower. Among them was one which the keeper represented as being " so very tame that you might put your hand into his mouth." Taking him at his word, our young gentleman, to the horror of the spectators, forthwith thrust his hand into the beast's jaws. Providentially, however, he did not suffer for his temerity, the lion being no doubt as much astonished as the lookers-on.

In May he journeyed to Spithead and joined the *Renown*. When joining the *Martin*, he had had some previous acquaintance with the captain and other officers, and had had John Brougham as a messmate. But on board his new ship he knew no one, and he confesses that, on finding himself alone in the gloomy region of the cockpit, a fit of despondency overcame him, and sitting down on his sea-chest he burst into tears. However, he soon got the better of his weakness, and made himself quite at home, and is described by the future Admiral Sir Augustus Clifford—who was at this time a midshipman on board the same ship—as a " fine, sturdy, energetic boy, small for his age, but active and very strong."

The Admiral might have added that he was also very dark—"black as the devil" is his own description of himself—so much so that the name "Black Charles," or "Black Charlie," which some of his relatives appear to have already bestowed upon him, was likewise given him by his shipmates, and clung to him throughout his professional career.

Shortly after young Napier joined the *Renown*, that vessel sailed for the West Coast of France, as part of a squadron that was to operate there under the orders of Sir John Warren; and we hear of her boats being actively engaged in the Quimper River and in other places. As in those days midshipmen's names were very seldom published in the *Gazette*, we do not know whether the erstwhile sturdy little leader of the Edinburgh "bickerings" took part in any of these dashing affairs; but, if he did, it is safe to assume that he acquitted himself with credit. In August, 1800, Warren's squadron, strengthened by the addition of several vessels having a body of troops on board, proceeded to Ferrol, but the expedition proved a fiasco. Then it sailed for the Mediterranean to reinforce the fleet under Lord Keith, where in the course of the following year it was employed in assisting the garrison of Fort Ferrajo, in the island of Elba, on which occasion Charles Napier is mentioned in the Admiralty records as having been under fire.

A little while before the Elba expedition, Captain Eyles had been succeeded in the command of the *Renown* by Captain White, a change which was probably hailed with no small satisfaction by the "middies" on board that vessel, and by Charles Napier in particular. For Captain Eyles appears to have been a very stern disciplinarian, and had, on one occasion, caused that young gentleman to be flogged, for hacking a cable with a cutlass, in exemplifying his proposed mode of cutting off an enemy's head. Many years after, when Charles Napier was a post-captain himself, he met his old commander, then an Admiral, on some public occasion, and, on the latter inquiring if he remembered him, dryly replied: "Whether I remember you or not, a certain part of me does well enough."*

The *Renown* remained in the Mediterranean until the Peace of Amiens in 1802, and then returned home, when the young

* Major-General Elers Napier: "Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.," vol. I., p. 10.

THE HON. MRS. CHARLES NAPIER,
With her infant son (afterwards Admiral Sir Charles Napier).

[To face p. 6.

From an engraving by G. Greatbach, after a drawing by G. W. Terry.

H.M. 18-GUN BRIG-SLOOP "RECRUIT" (CAPTAIN CHARLES NAPIER) engaging the French 74-gun ship "d'Hautpoult," April 16, 1809.

Text p. 10.]

[To face p. 7.

sailor obtained leave and proceeded to Scotland, on a visit to his friends.

"When he first called at our house on returning from sea," relates one of his relatives, "finding nobody at home, he would not give his name, but told the servants to say that somebody 'as black as the deevil' had called to see them, and that he would soon come again." And the writer adds: "One of the earliest recollections of my childhood is that of 'black Cousin Charles,' as we used to call him. And our great delight as children was to get him to walk with us and our old nurse in the meadows near George's Square, when he would sometimes carry the youngest in his arms. On one of these occasions, he was asked by a young lady passing whether he was a nursery-maid, to which he replied, with the ready good-humour and smartness of a middy: 'Yes, ma'am, perhaps you will hire me.'"

"This fondness for children," observes General Elers Napier, "continued in after life, and when far advanced in years it was one of his greatest pleasures to be surrounded by his grandchildren. Seated in a low arm-chair, he would often have one or two of them on his knees, whilst the others amused themselves in playing with and curling his venerable grey hair. Affection and kindness to children were, indeed, always prominent features in his character."*

After greeting his own family, Charles Napier went to the High School, where his appearance in full uniform, and armed, it is said, with a sword almost as long as himself, excited great admiration and not a little envy amongst his old schoolfellows. He duly paid his respects to his former master, the celebrated Professor Adams, who forthwith assembled all his class, consisting of about one hundred and fifty boys, and in their presence delivered a short speech, complimenting his former pupil on having already, at the age of fifteen, served his King and country for upwards of two years with honour and credit to himself. After which, at the request of the hero of the occasion, a holiday was granted to his younger brother and some of the other boys, in order that they might make a country excursion together, and the youthful party sallied forth in great glee with Charles Napier, sword, uniform and all at their head.

* "The Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.," vol. I., p. 11.

As a journal kept by Mrs. Napier, in which she carefully entered all the letters received from her sailor-boy and every item of intelligence which came to hand concerning him, has most unfortunately been lost, and as Charles himself never kept any record of the first years of his professional career, we are left very much in the dark relative to many interesting circumstances during that period. It is uncertain, therefore, whether, on the expiration of his leave, he rejoined the *Renown*, or was forthwith transferred to the *Greyhound*, a 32-gun frigate, Captain (afterwards Sir) William Hoste, to which ship he was appointed in November, 1802, and in which he again saw service in the Mediterranean.

Anyway, he did not remain very long in the *Greyhound*, for very soon after the renewal of the war with France he was transferred to the *Egyptienne* (a fine 44-gun frigate, taken from the French in the harbour of Alexandria, at its capitulation in 1801), commanded by Captain the Hon. Charles Elphinstone Fleeming,* which for some months was actively employed in the Channel and off the coast of France, during which she captured the privateer *La Chiffonette* and other vessels. In this frigate Charles Napier appears to have served about eighteen months, the latter part of the time being passed in a voyage to St. Helena, in charge of convoy.

His next ship was the *Mediator*, on board which he served in the North Sea during parts of the years 1804 and 1805. Mention now begins to be made of him by William James, the naval historian, who, under the head of "Channel Services in 1805," relates that Acting-Lieutenants Charles Napier and John Lake were concerned in an attack made in April, 1805, on a part of the Boulogne flotilla. He was then in his nineteenth year, and in the sixth of his service, and appears to have been in command of the gun-brig *Starling*. It is further recorded that he volun-

* "Whilst on board the *Egyptienne*, the story goes that Captain Fleeming on one occasion used language towards him which he considered unjustifiable, even from a captain to a midshipman. He had, however, in that position, no redress to expect; but the injury rankled in his breast, and some years afterwards, when he was either a commander or a post-captain, happening to be on the same station with his former chief, he employed his friend, the late Sir Francis Collier, to demand satisfaction of Captain Fleeming. The hostile parties met on the appointed ground, and although, through the intervention of their seconds, they shook hands, they were never friends till many years after, when at a public dinner Captain Fleeming said something complimentary of his former midshipman of the *Egyptienne*, and a sincere reconciliation was the consequence of this well-timed and courteous act."—"Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.," vol. I., p. 12.

teered to attempt the entire destruction of the flotilla by means of rocket-boats, but his offer was not accepted. We next hear of him as mate on board the *Renommée*, a 36-gun frigate, commanded by Sir Thomas Livingstone. On July 18, 1805, this vessel engaged the batteries between Andreselles and Ambleteuse, and sustained considerable damage in the action.

On November 30 of the same year, Charles Napier, having served his time and passed his examination, was promoted lieutenant, and appointed to the *Courageux*, of 74 guns, commanded by Captain Bissett. The *Courageux* was shortly afterwards placed under the orders of Sir John Warren, and proceeded with him to the West Indies, in search of a French squadron which had escaped from Brest. On March 13, 1806, Warren's squadron fell in with and captured the French 74-gun ship *Marengo* and the frigate *Belle Poule*, homeward bound from the East Indies.*

* James, in his "Naval History," does not mention the fact of the *Courageux* having been present at this action, but that she took part in it cannot be disputed.

CHAPTER II

THE WEST INDIES AND THE PENINSULA

TOWARDS the end of 1806, Charles Napier would appear to have come to England, but early in the following year he was again serving in the West Indies as a lieutenant in the *St. George*. In the following November he was promoted to the rank of commander and appointed to the command of the brig *Pultusk*. He now began to gather laurels on his own account. Landing on the Spanish Main, with twelve men, he captured a guarda-costa, which he had chased ashore, and which was defended by three or four small guns and thirty-six men whom she had landed. He also landed and took a battery on the coast of Porto Rico and a merchant schooner, the enemy running away after firing their guns. In December, 1807, he was present at the reduction of the Danish islands, St. Thomas and Santa Cruz.

In August, 1808, he was transferred to the *Recruit*, an 18-gun brig-sloop, and on September 6 following fought a severe action with a French corvette, the *Diligente*, of 22 guns, to the windward of Antigua. "The second shot she fired," he writes in his autobiography, "broke my right thigh, and the bone perforated the flesh. The only lieutenant on board was mortally wounded soon after; the action was continued by the master till our mainstay was shot away; the mainmast, which was before sprung, unfortunately fell at the moment we expected victory. Our loss was six killed and twenty-three wounded, half of them mortally. The action lasted nearly three hours."

William James, in his "Naval History of Great Britain," gives the following account of this affair:—

"On this day [September 6] the British 18-gun brig-sloop *Recruit*, Captain Charles Napier, standing close-hauled on the starboard tack, with the wind from the east by north, discovered the *Diligente* in the north-east, going free on the larboard tack, or in the direction of the island of Martinique. The *Recruit* immediately tacked and made all

sail in chase. At 8h. 15m. A.M. the *Diligente* tacked to preserve the weather-gage, and in less than a quarter of an hour afterwards hoisted a French ensign and pendant.

"At 8h. 30m. A.M. the two vessels, the *Recruit* on the larboard and the *Diligente* on the starboard tack, passed each other within pistol-shot, and exchanged broadsides. On this occasion, Captain Napier was wounded, but not, we believe, so as to oblige him to quit the deck. At 8h. 40m. A.M. both vessels, having passed out of gun-shot, tacked and again exchanged broadsides. The *Diligente* then wore, with the intention of raking the *Recruit* astern; but the brig wore also, and brought her antagonist to close action with the larboard guns. At 9h. 20m. A.M. the second lieutenant (Moses de Willetts) was wounded. In this way, broadside to broadside, the action continued until 11h. 30m. A.M., when the *Recruit* had her mainmast shot away. While this lay over the stern the brig continued the action with her foremost guns, and made several attempts to board her antagonist; but the *Diligente* every time sheered off. The French ship then backed her mizentopsail, and, shooting up under the brig's stern, raked her. As the *Diligente* stood along her starboard-beam, the *Recruit* returned this fire, but the *Diligente* reserved her next broadside, until, bearing up athwart the bows of her disabled antagonist, she was enabled to bestow it with more effect. The *Diligente* then stood along the brig's larboard beam, with the intention probably of running round her a second time; but a well-directed fire from the *Recruit* blew up a part of the ship's quarter, and cut away her stern-boat filled with small-arm men. Immediately on this the *Diligente* put her helm up, and ran away before the wind.

"The *Recruit* quickly set about clearing the wreck, refitting her rigging, re-breaching and re-mounting her carronades, many of which had upset, and preparing herself to renew the action with the French ship, who then lay upon her lee-beam repairing her damages. At 2 P.M., having got ready to engage, the *Recruit* bore up close; but the *Diligente*, setting courses, topsails and topgallant-sails, hauled to the wind on the starboard tack. At 4 P.M. the *Recruit* got up a jury mainmast and set a royal upon it, and hoisting her foretopsail, endeavoured again to close; but every effort was in vain, and by 7h. 30m. P.M. the *Diligente* had run herself completely out of sight." *

Napier recovered from his wound in about three months, in time to take part in the reduction of Martinique at the beginning of 1809.

The expedition against Martinique consisted of six ships of the line, one 44-gun ship, five frigates, one 22-gun sloop, and

* The extent of the loss which the *Diligente* had sustained was never made public; but we must suppose it to have been very heavy to explain her captain abandoning the action after he had knocked away his antagonist's mainmast. The *Diligente* reached Martinique in safety, and, on the surrender of the island to the British a few months later, was one of the French vessels to fall into the hands of the conquerors.

thirteen sloops or smaller vessels, under the command of Rear-Admiral Hon. Sir Alexander Cochrane, having in charge a fleet of transports, with some 10,000 troops on board. On January 30, prior to the successful attack on the Ile aux Ramiers, or Pigeon Island, the *Recruit*, with the frigates *Æolus* and *Cleopatra*, Captains Lord William Fitzroy and Samuel Pechell, were detached to the upper part of Fort Royal Bay, and anchored in the night close to Fort Edward. On the approach of the two frigates and the *Recruit*, the enemy set on fire and destroyed the frigate *Amphitrite* and other vessels in the harbour.

When daylight came, it appeared to Napier that Fort Edward had either been abandoned altogether or was very weakly garrisoned, and he pointed out the advantage of immediately storming it, and asked for the seamen and the marines for that purpose. But Lord William Fitzroy thought it too hazardous, as it was impossible to ascertain whether it was garrisoned or abandoned, or what number of men might be in it. Napier thereupon volunteered to clear up the doubt, and with four volunteers, immediately rowed ashore in his gig, scaled the wall and hoisted the British flag on the ramparts, under the eyes of the garrison of Fort Bourbon. He lost no time in communicating the fact that Fort Edward was abandoned to Admiral Cochrane, and eight hundred troops were landed to occupy it, and the mortars found there turned against the enemy in Fort Bourbon, which was speedily obliged to capitulate.

Shortly after this Napier was promoted post-captain by Sir Alexander Cochrane, and appointed to the *Jason*, a line-of-battle ship, but he did not immediately join, and towards the middle of April, while still in command of the *Recruit*, brilliantly distinguished himself by his courageous and masterly handling of that vessel in the famous running fight between the French 74-gun ship *d'Hautpoult* and Cochrane's squadron.

The *d'Hautpoult*, with two other "74's," the *Courageux* and the *Polonais*, under the command of Commodore Amable Gilles Troude, had contrived to escape from Lorient, slip through our cruisers, and convoy two armed *en flûte* frigates, the *Furieuse* and the *Félicité*, laden with troops, flour and military stores, for the garrison of Martinique, across the Atlantic. On learning, however, that Martinique had fallen into the hands of the British, Troude altered his course for the Saintes, where he

intended to watch for an opportunity of getting across to Basse-terre, Guadaloupe. But scarcely had he cast anchor in the harbour of the Saintes than he found himself blockaded by a superior hostile squadron, under Cochrane.

The Saintes, which consist of two small islands, each about three leagues in circumference, exclusive of some still smaller ones, so arranged as to form a commodious roadstead or harbour between the two larger islands, lie between Vieux Fort, near the southern extremity of Basse-terre, Guadaloupe, and Pointe des Ajoupas, on the west of Marie-Galante, about five leagues distant from the latter and two from the former. The roadstead, or harbour, having three entrances in different directions, is not easily blockaded, and in these circumstances it was thought advisable to land a body of troops, for the twofold purpose of driving the French ships to put to sea and of reducing the islands, which had at all times afforded enemy ships a capital shelter.

Accordingly, on April 12, a small British squadron, under the command of Captain Beaver, of the 40-gun frigate *Acasta*, accompanied by a fleet of transports having from 2,000 to 3,000 troops on board, sailed from Fort Royal Bay, Martinique, and next day arrived off the Saintes. On the 14th a landing was effected with but little loss, and our troops succeeded, after some fighting, in capturing a lofty hill, which completely commanded the harbour. Two 8-inch howitzers were then brought up and bombarded the ships so effectively, that they were soon obliged to get under weigh, and at 9.30 p.m. they sailed through the windward passage and stood out to sea.

Although the Frenchmen were favoured by an unusually dark night, their departure did not escape the vigilance of the British inshore squadron of sloops and brigs, among which was the *Recruit*, which did not fail to send the preconcerted signal to the Admiral outside. But let us allow Charles Napier to relate in his own words what followed :—

"I immediately bore up in chase, making signals to the rest of the squadron, which was also done by the *Hazard* and *Hawke*. The *Neptune*,* bearing the Admiral's flag, and the *Pompée* brought up a strong breeze, and exchanged a few shots, but they soon dropped astern. The *Recruit* sailed well, and I took up my position on the quarter of the *d'Hautpoult*,

* The *Neptune* was a 98-gun line-of-battle ship ; the *Pompée* a 74.

within grapeshot, where I remained the whole night, leading on our squadron, the enemy retreating in a line abreast.

"At daylight the *Hawke* brig was three or four miles astern of the *Recruit*, the *Pompée* five or six, the *Neptune* seven or eight. I then commenced firing on the sternmost, yawing under her stern and on her quarter, exposed to the stern guns of three sail of the line, and the occasional broadsides of the other two; but, being afraid of having their spars knocked away, they seldom rounded to, and they fired in such a hurry that we were only hulled three times. I once crossed their stern, fired three or four broadsides, and again took up my position on the *d'Hautpoult's* quarter, where they allowed me to remain the whole day, contenting themselves with yawing and firing their stern guns, but without much effect, being always in a hurry to resume their course. Towards evening the *Pompée* had gained on the *d'Hautpoult*, and the French commodore, seeing the impossibility of saving her without risking an action, hauled to the southward as the *Pompée* was coming. I parted in chase of the other ships, in hopes of drawing the *Latona* and *Castor*, now in action, after me; but they did not see my signals and followed the *Pompée*. In the night I lost the enemy, from their superiority in sailing; two days after I joined the *Pompée* and *Castor* at the close of the action with the *d'Hautpoult*, who was captured,* and I was removed into her on the spot by Sir Alexander Cochrane, in consequence of my conduct as set forth in his and Captain Fahies' letter."†

"In the part which the *Recruit* played in the capture of the *d'Hautpoult*," observes General Elers Napier in his biography of his step-father, "it is difficult which most to admire—the gallantry or seamanship of her youthful commander. Several times during the chase, when Sir Alexander Cochrane thought the little vessel in most imminent danger, did he order the signal to be made for her recall; but before the flags for that purpose could be bent on, the *Recruit* had, by a skilful manœuvre, placed herself in a less perilous position, when the order was cancelled again and again."‡

James's comments on the action are as follows:

"The conduct of the *Pompée* was such as might be expected of her, and the *Castor* gave proof of a commendable zeal in closing with so powerful an antagonist; but what shall we say of the *Recruit?* Her behaviour was gallant in the extreme, and was

* She was captured at 5.15 a.m. on the 17th, after a running fight of fifty-five hours, eight leagues north-east by north of Cape Roxo, Porto Rica.

† The *d'Hautpoult* was added to the British navy under the name of the *Abercromby*, and for three or four years rendered good service.

‡ Major-General Elers Napier: "The Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.," vol. I., p. 18.

CAPTAIN THE HON. CHARLES NAPIER, R.N.,
Father of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.

[To face p. 11.

From an oil painting.

H.M.S. "EURYALUS," 36 GUNS, 1815.

See p. 38.]

To face p. 23.

well calculated to efface the stain which not many weeks before the *Driver's* conduct had seemingly put upon the sloop class."*

It is related that, when delivering up his sword, the commander of the *d'Hautpoult* inquired the name of the little vessel which had so pluckily engaged him and so much retarded his movements. On being told that she was called the *Recruit*, he observed, with a sad smile and a shake of the head: "*Recruit!* no, that no conscript, that one very old soldier."

Napier only remained for a short time in command of the captured vessel, and was then removed into the *Jason*, in which he returned home with convoy. But, to his profound chagrin, scarcely had he arrived in England than he was superseded in his command by the Admiralty and placed on half-pay. "So that my conduct on that occasion [the pursuit of the *d'Hautpoult*]," he writes, "was the cause of putting me on half-pay. For, being on the Admiralty list in the West Indies, had that action not taken place, I should have had a vacancy in my turn, and the command of a ship. This I represented to Lord Mulgrave,† but without effect."

The mortification which the young captain experienced at such treatment was not diminished by the fact that the officer who succeeded him in command of the *Jason* (Captain King) had come home as his guest on board that vessel.

Since he was last on leave, Charles Napier had lost his father, who had died in December, 1807, in his seventy-seventh year. But his mother and youngest sister still resided at Merchistoun Hall, and thither he now proceeded. After a short stay with them, he went to Edinburgh, and during the University session of 1809–1810 attended classes for history, chemistry and mathematics, had a "knock," as he expressed it, at moral philosophy, and in the evenings studied by turns French, Italian, Spanish and German.

With all this intellectual activity he contrived, however, to combine a good deal of amusement, dancing frequently into the small hours of the morning, driving a handsome curricle and a

* James: "Naval History of Great Britain," vol. V.

† Henry Phipps, first Earl of Mulgrave and Viscount Normanby. He had become First Lord of the Admiralty on the formation of the Portland Ministry in April. 1807.

pair of good horses, and occasionally indulging in a gallop with the Caledonian Hounds. In the hunting field he was a conspicuous figure—in more ways than one—but scarcely a successful one, as will be gathered from the following amusing portrait of himself in March, 1833, which, under a fictitious designation, he furnished to the *United Service Magazine*, at the time he was captain of the frigate *Thames*. It purports to be written by one of the " middies " on board that vessel :—

" We had heard a good deal of our new captain from one of our messmates, who knew him in Scotland, and afterwards met him fox-hunting. He used to describe him mounted on a great long-legged bay mare, which had a great objection to raise her legs to a wooden fence or gate, and it was nothing unusual to see him sprawling on one side of the fence and the mare on the other. Sometimes he was to be seen with yellow breeches without boots, and at other times with blue trousers stuffed inside of yellow top-boots, and an old red coat, that probably belonged to some of his fox-hunting relatives. He used to ride hard, and very nearly broke his neck more than once; and many is the time we wished he had, for he was a perfect devil to the middies when out of temper. . . . He used to go to cover in a curricle, take out one horse, lash the pole to the other, and then send home the vehicle."

From the same record we learn that he was " so fond of dancing, that at all the Scotch meetings wherein the famous Scotch fiddler, Gow, was to be seen, he was sure to make his appearance. Our messmate met him once at a ball at ——, dancing with all the old women in the room, who had been giving themselves great airs, and he took much delight in showing them off either in a Scotch reel or country dance. He, however, met his match in an old widow lady in search of a husband, who, sticking her hands in her sides, fairly danced him down, to the great amusement of the whole party, and to his great annoyance, as he prided himself on being able to hold out longer in a Scotch reel than either the old or young. There was no getting him to dance again that night; he stuck to the supper-table, and got so jolly, that, instead of taking his place inside the post-chaise to go to his lodging, he got outside on the off horse, and managed to stick fast, to the astonishment of the party within.

" Next morning he appeared in the hunting field, with white trousers, silk stockings, and a uniform coat—the very dress, with the exception of epaulettes, he wore the night before. His

servant had forgot to bring his hunting traps, but dress was of no consequence to him."

However, he soon grew tired of a shore-going life, for when there was any fighting in progress Charles Napier was always anxious to be in the thick of it. As there seemed to be no immediate prospect of his getting another ship, he decided to do a little amateur soldiering, and, with that object in view, set out for Spain, on a visit to his cousins, William and George Napier,* of whom the former (afterwards General Sir William Napier, the historian of the Peninsular War) was at that time a captain in the 43rd, while the latter held the same rank in the 52nd Light Infantry. Both regiments were attached to the famous Light Division of Wellington's army. He landed at Oporto about the middle of September, 1810, accompanied by a Scottish lawyer, who had, like himself, come out to visit a relative and to see what war was like. The man of law soon saw more of it than he had bargained for, since on arriving at a place called Lamago, Captain Napier insisted on turning aside to witness a skirmish between a body of Portuguese militia and the baggage-train of the French army. His companion's horse, frightened by the sound of the firing, threw its rider and bolted, and, as at the same moment a party of French hussars came swooping down upon them, the poor lawyer only succeeded in effecting his escape by holding fast to Captain Napier's stirrup-leather during a flight of more than half a mile, by the end of which he must have begun to rue the day when he quitted the security of his chambers in Edinburgh.

On the evening of September 25, they reached the British lines on the ridge of Busaco, twenty miles north-east of Coimbra, where Wellington had decided to give battle to the enemy. Charles Napier had brought a letter of introduction to a certain colonel, whose name is not recorded, and from whom he had expected at least the offer of a dinner. But short commons with the British army had for some time past been the order of the day, and when their larders are nearly empty, people are sometimes not over-hospitably inclined. This was probably the case with the officer in question, for, after reading the letter, he

* They and their elder brother Charles were the sons of Colonel the Hon. George Napier, by his second wife, Lady Sarah Bunbury, who, as the beautiful Lady Sarah Lennox, so fascinated the youthful George III. that he had serious thoughts of making her his Queen.

recommended the bearer to go on to the Light Division, where, he told him, he would find quite a " family party," as, in addition to his cousins, William and George Napier, their brother, Major Charles Napier, had likewise joined the army.

The future conqueror of Scinde, who was at this time in his twenty-ninth year—three years the senior of his sailor cousin—had already seen much service in the Peninsula. At the beginning of the previous year he had commanded his regiment—the 50th—during Sir John Moore's famous retreat, and at Coruña, where the 50th greatly distinguished itself, had been wounded in five places and taken prisoner.* Most kindly treated by Marshal Soult, who sent his surgeon to attend him and had him brought to his own quarters, he was subsequently released on his parole not to serve again until exchanged by the chivalrous Ney, who had learned that his captive's mother was a widow, old and blind. In January, 1810, an exchange was effected, and Napier was able to rejoin his regiment; but finding it in quarters in Portugal, he obtained leave of absence and permission to join as a volunteer the Light Division, in which his two brothers were serving. He acted as aide-de-camp to Craufurd when that general fought his ill-judged action on the Coa, on which occasion he had two horses killed under him and showed the greatest gallantry, and when, after the fall of Almeida, the army fell back towards Lisbon, he was attached to Lord Wellington's staff.

Disappointed in his expectation of getting a dinner out of the colonel, Captain Napier had perforce to journey on in quest of the bivouac of the Light Division, which he eventually reached very tired and desperately hungry. The astonishment of his three cousins, whom he found seated with a group of their brother-officers round a blazing fire, at the sudden appearance of " Black Charles," as they called him, whom they had imagined to be hundreds of miles away—for he had neglected to send them any intimation of his resolve to visit the Peninsula—may be imagined. But they were more than delighted to see him, and overwhelmed him with questions, which, however, he refused to answer until he had satisfied the cravings of hunger. Provi-

* He received a sabre-cut on the head, a bayonet wound in the back, several contusions from the butt-end of a musket, had one of his legs broken by a musket-ball, and two ribs by a gun-shot.

sions were, as we have mentioned, far from plentiful in the army, but every one present gladly contributed his mite, and a plentiful, if somewhat rough, meal of ration beef and hard biscuit, washed down with strong red country wine, was soon forthcoming—a supper which Captain Napier afterwards described as, in the circumstances, " fit for a prince."

The advance-guard of the French army had come in sight that day, and their watch-fires were burning brightly on the opposite heights, and even far down on the margin of the deep valley below. It was expected that a night attack might be delivered by the enemy at any moment ; but, in point of fact, the French had no intention of taking the offensive, as their commander-in-chief, Masséna had not yet arrived, and only joined the advanced posts of his army at mid-day on the 26th.

As the night wore on and the expected attack was not delivered, most of those assembled round the camp-fire gradually dropped off to sleep, Captain Napier among the number, and, worn out by his tiring journey, he did not awake until it was broad daylight. He then found that the Light Division had moved off, and his cousins, not wishing to deprive him of his much-needed rest, had left him to his slumbers.

Determined not to be left out of any fighting that might be going forward, he at once summoned his Portuguese guide, and, mounting a mule, set off in pursuit, and presently came upon his cousin Charles, who was with General Craufurd. That brave, if somewhat rash, leader had advanced his division far along the ridge, and was watching a column of French grenadiers debouching from a ravine running into the valley below. It was the head of Ney's corps, and had that general been allowed to have his way, the battle would have begun forthwith. But Masséna did not wish to attack the British before he had reconnoitred them, and he spent the 26th in examining their position, which, though the slope was difficult of access, was extended and shallow. Nevertheless, before the day closed there was some sharp skirmishing between the advance posts of the hostile armies, in which nothing could prevent the sailor Napier from intervening. " Our pickets alone were engaged," writes an officer of the 7th Fusiliers, " but down went Napier to them, and shortly after hobbled up the hill with a shot through the flesh

of the thigh, which gave his white trousers a pretty diversity of white and crimson."*

One of Charles Napier's cousins, George Napier, gives the following account of this incident :—

"He (Charles Napier) had gone out with me the evening before the battle to skirmish a little with the French pickets, as General Craufurd thought that they had advanced rather closer to our advance-posts than was right, so I was ordered to move down and push them a little farther back. Charles Napier, of course, WOULD take a little white pony I had to ride with us, notwithstanding that I told him that it was very foolish, for most certainly he would get hit, being the only person on horseback. But he chose to go his own way, and in less than half an hour he got shot in the calf of the leg; but very slightly, and I was delighted at it, the obstinate dog; he deserved it well! However, he was very good-humoured, and laughed as much as anyone at his own folly." †

Captain Napier's wounded leg did not incapacitate him from further service as an amateur soldier; and he spent the night on picket duty with his cousin George, who, with a party of the 52nd, occupied one of the advance-posts near the bottom of the slope. During the night a great uproar suddenly broke out in the vicinity of their post.

"We thought," writes Charles Napier, "that the enemy's cavalry were upon us, and, in anticipation of such an event, George Napier immediately formed a rallying square. The alarm, however, subsided; quiet was restored, and it turned out that the cause of all the row was a number of commissariat mules that had broken adrift, and were scampering through the wood and over the wearied soldiers reposing around the fires in the bivouac."

At daybreak on the 27th, the French columns advanced to the attack, Ney's corps being thrown against the Light Division, on the Allied left; while Regnier's pushed forward against the Third Division, under Picton, which occupied the right centre of our position. Ney's attack was promptly repulsed, but Regnier's troops advanced up the slope with great courage and determination, and the Third Division found itself very hard pressed.

* Letter cited in Major-General Elers Napier's "Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B."

† "Passages in the Early Military Life of General Sir George Thomas Napier, K.C.B.," written by himself.

After the repulse of Ney's corps, Charles Napier had attached himself to the eldest of his cousins, whose duties, as one of Wellington's aides-de-camp, would be certain to summon him to the spot where danger threatened. Gaining the top of the ridge, they galloped along to the right, and could see Picton, hat in hand, cheering on his men, with his brigade-major, Pakenham, by his side.

The situation as the two young men reached them was a critical one. "The Allies," writes Sir William Napier, in his "History of the Peninsular War," "resisted vigorously, and six guns blazed along the ascent with grape; but in less than half an hour the French were close upon the summit, so swiftly and with such astonishing power and resolution did they scale the mountain, overthrowing everything that opposed their progress. The right of the Third Division was forced back, the 8th Portuguese regiment was broken to pieces, and the hostile masses gained the highest part of the crest, just between the Third and Fifth Divisions."

Major Napier was wearing the scarlet uniform of the 50th, the only mounted officer in that colour, as the Staff were, of course, in blue. As Regnier's corps gained the crest of the ridge, a furious fire was opened upon the British line. Major Napier, however, remained on horseback, though all the staff and all the volunteers, with the single exception of his sailor cousin, dismounted. The latter, determined not to be outdone in courage, or rather in imprudence, by any soldier, likewise insisted on exposing himself, though in his naval uniform and white trousers streaked with crimson, from the wound of the preceding day, he was a scarcely less conspicuous mark than his cousin.

Though reckless of his own life, Captain Napier was not, however, unmindful of his relative's safety, and begged him, if he would not dismount, at least to put a cloak over his uniform. The answer was: "No! This is the dress of my regiment, and in it I will show or fall this day." The sailor, not wishing to show himself less intrepid, thereupon exclaimed: "I say, Charles, what an infernal funk my agent would be in, if he saw now what a chance he had of losing all the money I am in his books!" He had hardly uttered these words, when Major Napier, struck in the face by a musket-ball, swayed in his saddle, and would

have fallen, had he not supported him in his arms. The bullet had entered on the right of his nose and lodged in the left jaw, near the ear, shattering the bone to pieces. He assisted him to dismount, and summoning four soldiers of the Guards, had him carried to the rear. On their way they passed close to Lord Wellington, who inquired the name of the wounded officer, upon which Major Napier, though faint from loss of blood, waved his hat, made an attempt at a cheer, and muttered (for he was unable to speak) that "he could not die at a better time."

Captain Napier, after accompanying his cousin out of fire, remained with him until the surgeons had extracted the bullet. This was a most difficult operation, for the ball was firmly embedded in the jaw-bone, and its removal caused the wounded man the most intense agony. "But," says his cousin, "it was only by the iron grip of his hand, which I held within my own, that I was aware of the sufferings poor Charles then endured, for neither a groan nor a sigh was suffered to escape his lips."

After the operation, Major Napier was conveyed to the convent of Busaco,* while his cousin, seizing the bridle of a stray artillery horse that was passing by, for his own had escaped, returned to the crest of the ridge.† Here he found that since his departure

* "Apparently dying, he was conveyed to the convent of Busaco, some miles off; his wound was there dressed, and he found his way to Coimbra, a day's march, by next morning. He hoped to have rest and care at that place, but was hardly able to preserve his life from the brutality and cowardice, if not worse, of an army physician, not a surgeon, to whom he had been delivered. This vile fellow, becoming cognizant of a rumour that the enemy was approaching, not only left his hurts actually unbandaged to save himself, but carried off his patient's horses, leaving him for several hours in expectation of death or captivity. His servant, an active fellow, recovered the animals by force and bandaged his master's face again. Then he made his way, under a burning sun, to Lisbon, a journey of several days. At Lisbon he was joined by his brother George, who had been shot through the upper part of the thigh. Their hurts were very serious, Charles's menacing, but with an elastic vivacity he bore his sufferings. 'You never saw so ugly a thief as I am,' he wrote to his mother, Lady Sarah Napier."—Sir William Napier: "Life and Opinions of General Sir Charles Napier," vol. I.

† In a letter written shortly afterwards to his mother, Major Napier says: "Black Charles, indeed, like a true sailor, was active as possible, and personally assisted in carrying me. . . . I like Harry Fox and Charles Napier the better for not staying with me, and would not have thanked them if they had; I should have attributed it to a dislike of returning into fire. My uneasiness was great, lest George and William should come, though only five hundred yards off; yet I felt almost sure they would not. At the Coa I left William with the first surgeon, and went back."—Sir William Napier: "Life and Opinions of General Sir Charles Napier," vol. I.

with his wounded relative a great change had come over the scene. Wellington had caused two guns to be brought up, which had effectively enfiladed the advancing enemy with grape and checked their further progress, and a dashing charge by the 88th and 45th Regiments had turned the wavering fortune of the day and forced the French back down the slope.

Thus, the British remained in possession of the field, and Wellington was enabled to continue his retreat unmolested to the impregnable position which he had prepared for his army. The victory must be regarded as one of the finest achievements of the Peninsular War, since, though the opposing armies were nearly equal in numbers, the French consisted of seasoned soldiers, while that of the Allies was largely composed of raw Portuguese levies, quite unable to stand their ground against veteran troops. In this engagement the French lost 4,500 men, the Allies about 1,300.

After the Battle of Busaco, Captain Napier accompanied the army in its retreat to the lines of Torres Vedras, where he remained for some weeks. He was occasionally a guest at Lord Wellington's table, and the British Commander-in-Chief would appear to have been much amused at the sailor's peculiar notions on the subject of military warfare. " On one occasion," observes General Elers Napier, " he expressed his surprise at Wellington remaining quietly in the lines, with the French army so close at hand. He would probably, had he commanded, have made a ' boarding ' dash at them at once ; but the British general knew too well the advantage of the position which he held, and the result proved the wisdom of his apparent inaction."*

In November, as there appeared to be no immediate prospect of seeing any further fighting, he left the army and proceeded to Cadiz, probably by way of Lisbon and the Algarves, as, from a passage which occurs in his " History of the War of Succession

* In a letter to his mother Major Charles Napier writes : " Black Charles is a queer fellow as ever crossed me, and as honest a one. He is going to Cadiz ; we shall see him no more. He is the delight of my life, and should live with me, and be trusted with any enterprise, if I were a great man. He being just fit for a sailor : that is, bold, decided and active—he will make a figure yet. Lord Wellington recently said to him : ' I could easily beat the French, but England has no other army, and it would cost me ten thousand men ; so we must have prudence and fight when they must lose men and we not.' " It was probably on this occasion that the remark to Wellington, to which General Elers Napier refers, was made.

in Portugal," he had evidently paid a previous visit to that province, and this was the only opportunity he could have had of so doing. At Cadiz he found his younger brother Thomas, at this time a captain in the Chasseurs Britanniques, a regiment composed mostly of foreigners who had enlisted in the British service. Thomas Napier introduced him to the mess of his regiment, of which he became an honorary member, and where he appears to have been a great favourite. Wishing to improve his French, he refused for some time to speak anything else, and created a good deal of merriment by the amusing blunders which he occasionally made. In Spanish, which, it will be remembered, he had begun to study at Edinburgh, he made rapid progress, under the instruction of teachers more charming, if less erudite, than those whom he had found in the Scottish capital. Among them were the pretty and vivacious daughters of a certain Señor V——, a member of the Council of Regency, at whose hospitable house he and his brother passed a good deal of their time. "The señoritas," writes General Elers Napier, "would sometimes, with playful badinage, remark on the great difference of appearance between the brothers: the soldier being tall and fair—the sailor quite the reverse; and I have heard the latter relate that, on a particular occasion, one of these lively girls, while commenting on this circumstance, said, with arch naïveté: 'What, one so fair—the other so dark—*Ah de mi! Caballeros, que habra entonces hecho su madre de Ustedes?*'"*

Towards the end of the year, Thomas Napier's regiment was ordered to Portugal, and his sailor brother, whose leave of absence from England was on the point of expiring, and who was impatient to be once more afloat, acquainted the Admiralty with his desire in the following characteristic epistle:—

"My leave of absence is just out. I don't think it worth remaining here, for I expect you will give me a ship, as I am almost tired of campaigning, which is a d——d rum concern.

"I am, etc.,

"CHARLES NAPIER."

* "Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B."

CHAPTER III

A ROVING COMMISSION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

THIS rather novel mode of applying for a ship was attended with success, and early in 1811 Captain Napier was appointed to the *Thames*, a 32-gun frigate, and for the next two years was actively engaged on the west coast of Italy, more especially of Naples, stopping the enemy's carrying trade, intercepting their supplies, capturing or destroying their gunboats or coasting vessels, often under the guns of their batteries on shore, and harassing them in every conceivable way.

Charles Napier was probably never happier than during this period of his career, when he was practically his own commander-in-chief, free to concert his own plans and to carry them into effect himself; and this half-piratical kind of life, which gave the fullest scope to his enterprising and adventurous spirit, suited him admirably, and in after years he would often descant upon it with infinite zest. We possess, indeed, in the journal contributed by him to the *United Service Magazine*, from which we have already had occasion to quote, and which, it will be remembered, is supposed to have been written by one of the midshipmen on board the *Thames*, a most graphic and interesting account from his own pen of some of his chief exploits at this time.

The *Thames*, which had been for some little time in the Mediterranean, was at Palermo when Captain Napier joined her. He sailed for that port on board a merchant brig, which, when some little distance from her destination, was sighted and chased by a Neapolitan privateer, and so hard pressed that her master was obliged to run her ashore on the coast of Sicily to avoid capture.

The officers and crew of his new ship were, we are told, not a little astonished at the first appearance of their new captain.

"Never," writes the supposed midshipman, "shall I forget his first

appearance, when he came up the side—a black, ugly-looking fellow, with one leg shorter than the other, and the toe turned out, like a dancing-master. He had been wounded in the West Indies, and halted considerably, but, nevertheless, seemed tolerably active on his pins. His clothes were good enough, but appeared as if they had been hove on with a pitch-fork; and, to crown the whole, he wore a three-cornered cocked hat right athwart-ships."

We may here observe that the habit of wearing a naval cocked hat "right athwart-ships" was a peculiarity in which Captain Napier invariably indulged whenever he had an opportunity of donning this head-dress.

"Scarce was our new captain aboard," the journal proceeds, "before he poked his nose into every corner of the ship; nay, I believe, he was at the mastheads before dark. Orders were given to get ready for sea with all possible dispatch. The *C*——* had just arrived from Calabria, where the trade was brisk, and our captain thought that a sight of the coast of Italy would be more agreeable than all the fooleries of Palermo.† The *Thames* was well manned and in good order, and had excellent boats; but she sailed badly; the crew were rather sickly, and the men had got into the habit of being somewhat partial to the doctor's list, the surgeon being a good man and easily weathered upon. Taking her, however, altogether, she was a capital command for a captain of two years' standing.

"We sailed from Palermo in company with the brig *C*——, commanded by Captain C——, just before the feast of Santa Rosalia, all as sulky as bears at not being allowed to stop and see the fun, and made for the coast of Rome, about the mouth of the Tiber.

"We soon found the captain was a precious taut hand, and not very particular in rubbing up everybody, whether lieutenant, mid, or man, who neglected his duty or who, he fancied, did so, which was pretty nearly the same thing. After running down the coast of Rome, we crossed Naples Bay, and arrived at the Gulf of Salerno, without meeting an enemy. The barge and pinnace were sent along the coast to give information, the *C*—— went off Palermo to protect the boats, and we remained off Cape Licosa. Next day a Sicilian privateer brought intelligence that a convoy of between thirty and forty sail were trying to get into the port of Palermo, which the *C*—— was endeavouring to prevent. It was quite calm, the boats were got out, the only two sweeps worked, and several large oars were put into requisition, and we got the old ship along nearly a knot, when the sea-breeze springing up, brought us in a few hours to the *C*——, which had driven the convoy into the small port of Infreschi, in the Gulf of Policastro; they consisted of eleven

* The *Cephalus*, an 18-gun brig-sloop, commanded by Captain (afterwards Admiral Sir) Augustus Clifford, who had been a messmate of Charles Napier's in the *Renown*.

† The feast of Santa Rosalia was about to be celebrated at Palermo.

gunboats and scampavias, convoying twenty-two sail of vessels, and a raft of spars for the arsenal at Naples. The brig led in in fine style, and after the gunboats were silenced,* Captain Clifford pushed off in the boats and took possession of the vessels. The marines of the *Thames* were landed at the same time, and I shall never forget the captain scrambling along from the gangway, under the main and mizen chains, and, whilst abusing me for not shoving off fast enough, losing his hold and going overboard. He struck out for my boat, and having had a sufficient cooling, we pulled ashore without any further row, and I was well pleased that his mouth had been so completely stopped. He had, as I have before observed, been in a campaign in Portugal, and was rather fond of soldiering, and it really was a pretty sight to see our marines driving their sharpshooters up the hills, as we were towing off the prizes. A party was also thrown into a round tower to cover this operation and the re-embarkation of the marines and eighty-four prisoners they had captured.

"This little enterprise was completed and the ships and prizes under weigh in less than two hours, and we were all highly delighted with this, our first essay, which had been accomplished in a very neat manner. The gunboats had been distributed in little creeks round the bay, and the hills lined with armed men and the crews of the vessels; but we came upon them rather unexpectedly. They never saw the frigate till she rounded the point, and they considered their position quite safe from any attack of the brig."

We may add that this dashing affair did not cost the life of a single man, the only casualties sustained being the boatswain and three men of the *Cephalus* wounded.†

The victors proceeded to convoy their prizes to Palermo, where they received quite an ovation. "It is impossible," said Sir Augustus Clifford, many years later, in conversation with General Elers Napier, "to express the gratification we felt on towing our prizes into the Bay of Palermo, which we did with English colours flying over the French ones, making a great show for the Palermitans, and as we came in on Sunday afternoon, the mole and the fashionable promenade of the 'Marino' were crowded with spectators." Sir Augustus proceeded to describe Charles Napier at this period as—what, indeed, he always was—a strict disciplinarian, but very just, and, consequently, popular with his men; adding that, when in harbour, he was

* The gunboats and scampavias mounted between them six long 18-pounders, two 12-pounder carronades, three brass and two iron 6-pounders, and were manned by 280 men.—James' "Naval History of Great Britain."

† James' "Naval History of Great Britain."

very sociable and hospitable, and fond of giving dinners and parties on board the *Thames*, on which occasions he would often invite ladies and get up a dance.

Much to the regret of Captain Napier, he and the commander of the *Cephalus* were unable to co-operate in any further successful raids upon the enemy's shipping, as shortly after the affair at Infreschi, the brig was sent home with Lord William Bentinck, in whom were united the offices of Commander-in-Chief of our forces in Sicily and British Minister at the Court of Palermo. Bentinck had been experiencing great difficulty in contending with all the intrigues that surrounded him at the little Bourbon Court, and had decided that a personal interview with the Ministry at home would be more useful than volumes of correspondence.

In his next cruise, Captain Napier tells us, he made for the Italian coast near Gaëta. Between that place and the island of Ischia the *Thames* had the good luck to fall in with a number of feluccas, whom her boats speedily captured, after the fire from the frigate had silenced that of a tower beneath which the feluccas had taken shelter. They were fine vessels, but, as they were laden with iron ore, which was of little value, Captain Napier contented himself with keeping the three largest, and set the others at liberty, telling their masters jocularly that he should keep a sharp look-out for them on their return from the coast of Calabria, whither they were bound for silk and oil.

The *Thames* next proceeded to reconnoitre the Bay of Naples, a somewhat nervous operation, as there was a large fleet of gunboats there, always ready to pounce upon any hostile ship which might happen to be becalmed. The *Thames*, however, was fortunate enough to get a fine breeze, which enabled her to steer close into the mole, where she saw a line-of-battle ship and a frigate fitting, and a small frigate which seemed ready for sea.

The breeze continuing, she ran along shore by Portici and the foot of Vesuvius, close over to Castellamare, where they saw a line-of-battle ship on the stocks; thence along the beautiful shores of Sorrento and Capri, and got out of the bay a little before sunset, just as the sea-breeze was dying away, highly pleased with their excursion, and no less gratified that they had escaped a calm and a consequent punishment from the Neapolitan gunboats.

" Next morning," continues the journal, " we ran along the coast from Capri to the Gulf of Salerno, which is high and picturesque, studded with towns and villages and well wooded and cultivated. Towards the afternoon we were close in with the town of Salerno, which in beauty only falls short of Naples. The temples of Pæstum are clearly discovered from the sea, and could we have found an excuse to land, we could easily have visited them under an escort of marines.

" The country here is flat, but resumes its boldness towards Cape Licosa. . . . Round this cape is a fine bay, with a rivulet. I here went ashore with three gigs to examine the practicability of watering, and, having a flag of truce, we were allowed to land very quietly. The peasantry and militia retreated into the country, refusing to communicate, but showing no appearance of hostility.

" This threw us off our guard, and, after examining the river, we were rowing leisurely off ; this the fellows perceived, and slunk down to the river under cover of the underwood, and let fly half a dozen musket-shots, two of which went through the gig and wounded one man. The ship was anchored next morning as close as possible, and the boats sent with a strong party to procure water. The militia were driven back, and the watering went on without interruption till towards evening, when a considerable force was collected from the neighbourhood, and they seemed determined to prevent, if possible, our re-embarkation. We were obliged to land all the marines and a strong party to drive them off, which was effected with the loss of one man killed and one slightly wounded. The casks were then got into the boats, and the covering-party made a pretty smart retreat, and we got out of musket-shot before they mustered up courage to advance. We, however, never again attempted watering on any part of the coast."

Next morning the *Thames* reconnoitred the port of Palinuro, ran round the Gulf of Policastro, and down the whole of the coast to the Gulf of St. Euphemia, as far as Pizzo, the principal port of Calabria. Here they perceived, with no small satisfaction, a number of vessels loading, as they calculated on snapping up the greater part of them before they reached Naples.

Charles Napier, like so many other visitors to this lovely coast both before and since his time, appears to have been greatly impressed by the glorious scenery.

" It is impossible," he writes, " to conceive anything more beautiful than the whole coast from Naples to the Faro Point ; the land is for the most part high, towns and villages seemed perched on the cliffs, without any possibility of approaching them. Belvedere, between the Gulf of Policastro and St. Euphemia, stands pre-eminent in beauty and magnificent scenery. Along the coast the towns and villages are thick and

open to aggression; but during the war, unless a convoy sought shelter, they were rarely disturbed."

After watering at Maliazzo, they proceeded to a spot near Gaëta, where they landed a dozen guerilla spies to rob the fort. Not one of these enterprising gentlemen was ever seen again, the explanation being that they had all been captured and promptly hanged. But this Captain Napier did not discover until some time afterwards; and, to his intense chagrin, he lost half the summer, and all chance of intercepting the vessels he had seen loading at Pizzo, in cruising off Gaëta, expecting to see the signal which it had been arranged that the spies were to show when they were ready to be taken off, and which, of course, never appeared.

One morning, when the *Thames* was standing in close, as it was blowing hard, three frigates were reported outside her to leeward. A French squadron had been for some time past expected at Naples, to escort the Neapolitan line-of-battle ship and frigates which Captain Napier had seen there to Toulon; and as there was some delay in answering the private signal which he hoisted, he made sure that they were the French ships, and feared that he might be caught. He endeavoured to show them a clean pair of heels, but the *Thames* "sailed like a hay-stack," and the strangers were overhauling her rapidly, when he saw, to his great relief, that they were British. One of the three frigates was the *Impérieuse*, a 38-gun ship, commanded by Captain the Hon. Henry Duncan, a son of the hero of Camperdown, and the *Impérieuse* took the *Thames* under her orders, as one of her consorts was returning next morning to her cruising-ground off the coast of Sardinia. Duncan proceeded to Ischia with the other frigate, leaving Napier to look out for the spies for a day or two longer, after which he was to join him. On his way, Duncan fell in with the annual fleet of coral-boats, bound for Naples, but they sailed so well that he only contrived to capture one, the rest succeeding in getting into the quarantine ground opposite the little island of Nisida, where they hauled up. On Napier joining him that evening, the boats of the three ships were sent in to lighten them of the coral boxes, of which each boat had got either one or two, according to their success in fishing. But, to their intense mortification, they found that they had arrived a day after the fair, so to speak,

for though the boats were there, the boxes, not being liable to plague, had been sent to Naples.

Napier, hitherto his own commander-in-chief, now found himself under the orders of another—a situation which he had always heartily disliked. Happily, however, the two youthful captains pulled well together, and, as will be seen, did good service in the common cause.

The *Thames* had not the good fortune to be in company with the *Impérieuse*, when on October 11, 1811, Captain Duncan commemorated the fourteenth anniversary of his father's great victory, by capturing two of the enemy's gunboats, sinking another, and taking by storm a strong fort at Possitano, in the Gulf of Salerno, although it was defended by a garrison three times as numerous as the attacking force.* But Captain Napier joined him a few days subsequent to this dashing exploit, and on the 19th the two frigates anchored close to the shore off Palinuro, on the coast of Calabria. Three boats, commanded by Lieutenant Travers, of the *Impérieuse*, went in, and without sustaining any casualty, brought off ten armed feluccas, laden with oil, although these vessels, for their better security, were banked up with sand and were defended by a large detachment of Neapolitan troops.

On the 21st, the *Impérieuse* and *Thames* discovered ten Neapolitan gunboats lying in the port of Palinuro, together with a number of merchant vessels, and also a quantity of spars, hauled up on the beach, which were intended for the equipment of the Neapolitan navy. From the strength and situation of the harbour, which was defended by a strong battery and dominated by heights, Captain Duncan did not consider that he had sufficient force at his disposal to deliver an attack with a prospect of complete success; and he therefore despatched the *Thames* to Sicily, to request Lieut.-General Maitland, who commanded our troops there, to reinforce him with a detachment of soldiers. On the 28th the *Thames* returned, with 250 men of the 62nd Regiment, under Major Derby,† but as her arrival coincided with the commencement of a south-west gale, operations had to be deferred until November 1.

* James: "Naval History of Great Britain."

† This officer's name is variously given in different accounts of this affair as Darby, Daly and Derby. The last is correct.

In the evening of that day, the weather being now favourable, Major Derby and his men, together with the marines of both frigates, under Lieutenant Pipon, of the *Impérieuse,* and a detachment of seamen, under Lieutenant Travers,* of the same vessel—the whole commanded by Captain Napier—were disembarked from the *Thames* at the back of the harbour, and in the most gallant manner ascended and carried the heights which dominated it, under a heavy fire from the enemy, who had gathered in force to oppose them.

But let us allow Napier to give his own account of this dashing exploit and what followed :—

" In the November following (1811), being under the orders of Captain Duncan, on the coast of Naples, I commanded the seamen and a detachment of 250 men of the 62nd Regiment, under Major Derby, in attacking the heights of Palinuro, in the harbour of which was a large convoy, protected by a strong battery and tower, thirteen gunboats, and a large body of troops under the orders of General Pignatelli, encamped on the sides of a valley, through which they thought we must pass to gain the heights, which were also occupied by sharpshooters. Lieutenant Travers, of the *Impérieuse,* discovered a path which I determined to take, though almost inaccessible ; and, while the troops were landing, I led the marines up under a heavy fire, and gained the heights. The enemy, seeing their mistake, advanced rapidly by another road, but too late to prevent our occupying them, and covering the advance of the 62nd and our light guns. Another party of the enemy advanced on our boats, who were obliged to retire, and in a few minutes we found ourselves hemmed in on Cape Palinuro, and without being able to gain possession of the battery and tower, the *Impérieuse* finding it impossible to get into the harbour, in consequence of the light winds.

" About midnight the enemy attacked our line in great force, and they were driven back in fine style. Our loss was one officer and — men killed, two officers and — men wounded, one of the former mortally.†

" At daylight our position was critical ; an increasing enemy on our front, our left harassed by gunboats, the sea on our right and rear, bounded by high rocks, rendering communication almost impossible, without water or provisions, and the ships becalmed. Captain Duncan came under the Cape in his boat, and, with much difficulty, I communicated our situation. He immediately determined to run into the harbour, and desired me to get into his boat if possible, which I effected

* Both Pipon and Travers had greatly distinguished themselves in the affair at Possitano.

† According to James, the total casualties in the whole affair were Lieutenant Kay, of the 62nd, and four men killed, and Lieutenant Pipon and ten men wounded.

by being lowered down the cliffs with ropes. At noon a breeze sprang up, both ships ran into the harbour, the batteries were attacked and destroyed, the whole convoy captured, and the troops embarked in the face of three times their number, to the great mortification of General Pignatelli, who had summoned them to surrender unconditionally.

"The two ships, accompanied by their prizes, consisting of six gunboats, each armed with a long 18-pounder, twenty-two feluccas laden with oil and cotton, and twenty large spars brought from the beach, put to the sea with the land-breeze. Four other gun-vessels, one mounting two 18-pounders, were destroyed."

Early in the winter, Napier ran down to Malta to refit and enjoy some of the gaieties which generally took place there at that season of the year. He then proceeded to Palermo, and, after spending a short time there, returned to his old cruising-gound off the coast of Naples. "There is, however," he writes, "a great difference between cruising there in winter and in summer; all enterprise in the former season is impracticable, it being quite impossible to keep the coast on board during blowing weather, without imminent risk of being caught on a lee shore, the Gulf of Policastro being the only place to anchor, and, even there, with the wind right in, it would be very far from agreeable. We stretched occasionally over to the coast of Sardinia, but, as our ship sailed badly, we might just as well have remained at Palermo."

At the beginning of April, the cruising-season properly so-called began, and after one or two minor successes, the *Thames* accomplished another brilliant little piece of work, when, in company with the *Pilot*, an 18-gun brig-sloop, commanded by Captain John Troup Nicholas, she attacked the port of Sapri, which was defended by a strong battery and tower, mounting two 32-pounders and garrisoned by an officer and some forty men. After being battered for two hours within pistol-shot, the garrison surrendered at discretion. "But," says Napier, "in consequence of their gallant defence, I allowed them to march out with the honours of war, but not to serve against us in this expedition." The British found here twenty-eight vessels laden with oil, some of them hauled up at a considerable distance from the beach, but before darkness set in they had all been launched and the battery blown up.

How eager Napier always was for a brush with the enemy the following anecdote, related many years later by an officer

who had served under him when he was in command of the *Thames*, will show :—

" In the same year—1812, I think—there were two French, or rather Neapolitan, frigates, lying close off the mole of Naples. Sir Charles, being very desirous of getting at them, adopted a plan which he thought might induce them to come out. For this purpose he had a blue ensign very much enlarged, and on it, in conspicuous letters, made of white bunting : ' *Thames*, 32 guns, 216 men,' was inscribed. This flag was stretched on a wooden frame and hoisted up at the mizen-peak. With this strange device of defiance, he ran the ship about two gunshots from the enemy, and there hove-to for a couple of hours. No notice having been taken of the ship, we ran out of the bay. His intention was that, if the frigates made any sign of pursuing the *Thames*, to board the first he could get alongside of, and, having carried her, then to have gone at her consort. I believe he would have succeeded, for though the *Thames*, a miserable twelve-pounder ship, was more like a candle-box than a man-of-war, she had a crew of 216 men, who would have carried everything before them."*

In the course of the following winter, the *Thames* again ran down to Malta to refit, and shortly afterwards Captain Napier received instructions to make an attack on the Island of Ponza, in conjunction with the *Furieuse*, an 18-pounder 36-gun frigate, commanded by Captain William Mounsey.

Ponza is the largest of a group of islands to the north of the Bay of Naples, and having a safe and commodious harbour, had long provided a convenient shelter for the privateers who harassed the Sicilian trade ; and as it, moreover, offered a valuable station, whence our cruisers could watch the naval proceedings of the enemy in the Bay of Naples, it had been resolved to attempt its capture. It was, however, garrisoned by nearly two hundred regular troops, besides the militia of the island, and its mole and harbour were defended by four batteries, strongly situated, and mounting ten 24 and 18-pounders, two 12-pounders, and two 9-inch mortars ; and it was therefore considered advisable to reinforce the two frigates with 500 men of the 2nd Battalion of the 10th Regiment of Foot, who were placed for the occasion under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Coffin, the Deputy-Quartermaster-General of our forces in Sicily.

* Cited by Major-General Elers Napier in " Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.," vol. I., p. 50.

As the weather was very unsettled, Captain Napier considered it dangerous to land the troops, as, in the event of the ships being blown off the coast, reinforcements for the enemy might be sent from Terracina, and the safety of the landing-force compromised. He therefore waited a few days for a favourable opportunity, and when this arrived, hoisted out the boats under cover of an island, and then, followed by the *Furieuse*, stood towards the harbour, as if cruising. When close off, the two frigates bore up, set their studding-sails, ran the gauntlet of the batteries, and within half an hour were at anchor within the mole (which was not a hundred yards wide, with a sunken rock in the centre of the passage), and were in possession of the island without the loss of a man, although the *Thames* had been hulled three times and the *Furieuse* twice, besides having their sails and rigging a good deal cut.

" On going in," writes Captain Napier, " the enemy opened their fire from all sides, but our guns were so well directed that not a man could show his head over the ramparts; and the governor was so much confounded that he struck his colours. The battery to the right, which was higher than our mastheads, and unassailable from the land side, followed his example."

The capture of Ponza was always a subject of just pride to Charles Napier, and, on assuming the command of the Constitutional Fleet of Portugal in 1833, he took from it, as his *nom de guerre*, the title of Don Carlos de Ponza.

CHAPTER IV

THE EXPEDITION UP THE POTOMAC

IT was, in all probability, the credit of his success at Ponza which led, in the following month, to Napier's transference to the *Euryalus*, a much finer frigate than the *Thames*, carrying 36 eighteen-pounder guns. He would seem, however, to have left the latter with regret, for, though in every way an inferior vessel to his new command, thanks to his splendid seamanship and the high state of efficiency to which he had brought her crew, he had, as we have seen, accomplished great things with her.

His appointment to the *Euryalus* removed him from his familiar cruising-ground to the south coast of France, where he was at first under the orders of Captain Brace, of the 74-gun ship *Berwick*. But the work he had to do was of the same nature, and was well, and in some instances brilliantly, performed. Thus, having driven all the coasting trade from Toulon to the eastward into Cavalaire Bay, where it was protected by batteries and a 10-gun xebec, on May 16, 1813, the boats of the *Euryalus* and the *Berwick* went in, destroyed the batteries, and brought out the xebec and twenty-two trading vessels, large and small, with the very trifling loss of one man killed and one missing.

In the December following, he was placed under the orders of Captain Ussher, of the *Undaunted*, to watch the French fleet at Toulon, and one day, being blown off the coast, sighted two French frigates and a schooner. The *Undaunted* was at the time well down to the westward, but by sunset the *Euryalus* had got within eight miles of the enemy, who were standing in for Corsica with a fine breeze. The *Undaunted*, seeing no prospect of coming up, being more than hull down, returned to Toulon, leaving her consort to continue the chase.

"Concluding that the enemy after dark would bear up for Calvi, I

directed the *Euryalus*," writes Captain Napier, "to be steered for the same place, under a heavy press of sail, in hopes of cutting them off. I was not disappointed. About ten, we discovered one close in shore, running down for Calvi, under all sail. The *Euryalus* coming fast up, and going nine knots, my intention was to lay her on board, in the event of getting alongside; but she succeeded in rounding the Cape at the moment her consort was discovered, a little outside, standing across our bows for the land. There was no time to lose. I had the choice of laying her on board, at the risk of running her down and losing the foremast and bowsprit, the *Euryalus* going nine knots, or lose her. I decided on attempting the former. A broadside was fired into the stern of one in passing, and I ordered the master to strike the other on the bow. I went forward to head the boarders, and to restrain their ardour, many having got out on the jib-boom, sprit-sail and dolphin-striker. Unfortunately, a gun was fired by accident, which, together with the darkness of the night, rendered more obscure by the proximity of the land, caused the master to mistake his distance; and at the moment I expected to strike her, I had the mortification to see her cross our bows, our sprit-sail grazing her stern. The helm was immediately put aport, the studding-sails got in, and we pushed her so close, that she ran ashore in the bottom of the bay, the *Euryalus* having just room to wear clear of a point of land that we had not before seen. It blew a gale all night, and next morning my disappointment was somewhat relieved on seeing our enemy a total wreck, and his consort at anchor close to him with her rudder beat off, but in such a situation that I could not get at her. The schooner was captured next day by the *Berwick*, and it appeared that we passed close to her, she being under the land; the other proved to be frigates armed *en flûte*, mounting twenty-two guns each, going to Corsica with troops and stores. The schooner had fourteen guns."

The blockade of Toulon continued throughout the winter of 1813–14, at the close of which the *Euryalus* took a run to Port Mahon, in Minorca, where at that time a 74-gun ship, the *Rivoli*, happened to be lying. Here a most entertaining incident occurred which is related by General Elers Napier as an instance of his distinguished step-father's eccentricities, and of that love of a merry jest in which he could never resist indulging, even when he had attained high rank in the Service :—

"An officer who was then on board the *Rivoli* recounted to me a most amusing anecdote about 'Charley Napier,' when he commanded the *Euryalus*, whilst they were together at Port Mahon.

"'One fine day,' said the officer in question, 'I landed and went up to the usual shop for supplying us with groceries. At the door I found Captain Napier, to my great surprise, seated on a donkey, dressed in a yellow coat, yellow waistcoat and yellow trousers, laced cocked hat and a pair of naval epaulettes. I had no further conversation with him beyond

common recognition and shaking hands, but I was afterwards informed that he had laid a wager with some one that he would ride about Mahon streets, and that he had begun at six o'clock that morning—it was about noon when I saw him—and I understood that he continued on till the evening, and won his bet. I have only stated what I actually saw with my own eyes.'

" This was the first time I had ever heard so detailed an account of the ' yellow dress,' which is still preserved as a sort of family relic. I can remember it well to the present day : the lining was rich cherry-coloured satin, and large buttons covered with the same, so as to make it look as conspicuous and ridiculous as possible. I have heard Captain Napier relate with much humour the circumstances of his winning this extraordinary dress from a tailor at Port Mahon, who agreed to give it him for nothing, on condition that he would wear it the whole day in the streets. The bargain was struck—Captain Napier doffed his uniform, donned the ' yellow,' and began to perambulate the streets. Mr. Snip, meanwhile, collected all the urchins of the place to follow and hoot at the man in the ' quarantine ' dress. The latter, however, was not thus to be put down by the clamour of the mob—he told them to laugh at the tailor, and not at him, as he was to have the dress for nothing, provided he wore it. The tables were immediately turned upon the poor tailor, who retired quite disconcerted, and ' Mad Charley ' carried off in triumph the ' yellow dress.'

" Such was the version of the story I had heard from his son's lips, but I never before knew the exact time or locality of the occurrence, until lately informed of these particulars by the person who witnessed the circumstance ; this account having been since confirmed by a flag-officer of high standing in the Navy."

On April 21, 1814, the *Euryalus*, which had returned to her station on the south coast of France, was cruising in company with the *Undaunted* off Marseilles, when she saw the city burst forth into a blaze of illuminations. " We concluded," writes Napier, " that Napoleon had gained a great victory, or that the Allies had entered Paris and made peace—either of which events would have caused rejoicings. At daylight the white flag was seen flying on the forts, upon which the two ships stood in, curious to ascertain what had taken place. As they approached the shore, the guns of the Château d'If fired a few shots at them—a compliment which the *Undaunted*, who led the way, promptly returned. But presently a boat with a flag of truce put off, and the Mayor of Marseilles came alongside, to apologize for the firing and to inform them that the Allies were in Paris and Napoleon dethroned. The mayor invited them to anchor in the roads, regretting that the sanitary laws of

the port, which since the frightful outbreak of the plague in 1721 had been of the most rigorous character, would prevent him from having the pleasure of welcoming them on shore.

"We accepted the invitation most readily," writes Napier, "with the secret intention of profiting by the general joy and enthusiasm, and outwitting the quarantine officers. After the complimentary salutes we rowed into the harbour, and were so clamorously invited by the people to land, that it was impossible to resist. The moment the boat touched the wharf, a rush was made by men, women and children, who embraced us with the most lively joy, and finally carried us in their arms to the Town Hall, where the municipal body were assembled, and, totally forgetting the quarantine laws, received us with the greatest enthusiasm. The first alderman had got through a long complimentary speech, when he was interrupted by a deputation from the Board of Health, expressing their surprise that the first act of the English should be setting the sanitary laws at naught—laws that had never been infringed except by Bonaparte, who was now dethroned."

After a great deal of excited argument between the sanitary officers and the municipal authorities, for Captain Napier and his companions pretended not to understand what was said to them, and confined themselves to shaking their heads and shrugging their shoulders, it was finally decided that the ships should be put in quarantine, their captains alone being allowed to remain on shore. The ships, however, had already been boarded by a swarm of persons of all classes, and, in spite of the efforts of the Board of Health, it was found impossible to keep them away; and the Governor, Count du Muïy, was at last obliged to lay the boom across the harbour and to call on the inhabitants by proclamation to respect the law. This farce continued for a week or ten days, when the quarantine flag was hauled down, and the officers and men invited to share in the gaieties of the town.

This invitation they accepted with alacrity, and were treated with great kindness and hospitality, the principal inhabitants vying with one another in the sumptuousness of the entertainments which they gave in their honour; and "it was most amusing to see our weather-beaten tars, who had been so long shut out from any rational amusement, except what they found at Minorca, figuring away in quadrilles, with all the good humour and awkwardness of John Bull, quite unacquainted at the time with French dancing."

In the midst of all this gaiety, the *Undaunted* sailed for Fréjus, to embark the fallen Emperor and convey him to Elba, but her place was speedily taken by several other ships, who came for the twofold purpose of recreation and of taking on board released British prisoners, who were flocking to Marseilles from all parts of France, and who likewise came in for their full share of hospitality. In consideration of the length of time the British ships had been at sea, the sanitary laws were considerably relaxed, entertainments were given on board to the authorities and the principal inhabitants, and "the French and English who had been so long at war seemed to forget their animosities, and to be only anxious to contribute to each other's enjoyment."

The *Euryalus* had been longer in the Mediterranean than any other frigate, and officers and men had fully made up their minds to be ordered home from Marseilles, when orders came for the ship to proceed to Minorca, to join the expedition which was about to sail for America. However, they resolved to make the best of it, and bidding a hasty adieu to their hospitable friends at Marseilles, where, if Napier is to be believed, not a few British officers left their hearts, they weighed anchor and sailed for Minorca.

At Minorca they found three frigates, the *Iphigenia, Bacchante* and *Furieuse,* refitting for the American station, and in their company they sailed for Gibraltar, where they received orders to take under convoy transports containing between three and four thousand men, under General Gosling, who were daily expected from Genoa. When the transports arrived, escorted by five ships-of-the-line, they had to provision and water; but there was so much delay in procuring supplies, that, when orders came to put to sea, they were short of almost every requisite for a voyage across the Atlantic. At Santa Cruz they succeeded in obtaining a scanty supply of water; but even then the convoy sailed from that port on a short allowance, and had not the wind been favourable, this expedition, intended to terminate the war with America, and equipped at enormous expense, might have been compelled to put back. "Who was to blame," writes Napier, "it is not for me to say, nor do I know; all that our commander could do by way of remonstrance and application was done, and yet we sailed in the manner I have described."

At Bermuda they found Sir Alexander Cochrane, who, at

the beginning of April, had succeeded Sir John Warren, as Commander-in-Chief on the American station, and Sir Pulteney Malcolm, who had arrived from the Gironde, a few days before, in charge of a squadron of troopships having General Ross and between two and three thousand soldiers and artillery on board. General Ross had orders to carry on the war in the Chesapeake, and General Gosling in New England.

Cochrane, who was burning to avenge the naval disasters we had sustained during the early part of the war, and, according to the late Captain Mahon, " brought to his duties a certain acrimony of feeling amounting almost to virulence,"* having made all the necessary arrangements, put the convoy under the orders of Sir Pulteney Malcolm and sailed for the Chesapeake, taking the *Euryalus* with him. Sir P. Malcolm, after provisioning and watering the fleet, was to follow with all possible dispatch. The Commander-in-Chief arrived at the beginning of August and joined Sir George Cockburn, who had been keeping the coast in a constant state of alarm, though the military force at his disposal was not sufficiently strong to undertake any important operation inland. Shortly after Sir Pulteney Malcolm arrived with the rest of the fleet and the transports, and the expedition against Washington was undertaken.

We do not propose to speak of this operation, since it was one in which Napier did not take part, but of another, in which he played a conspicuous rôle, and which, though of less importance, constitutes, from the difficulties which it presented and the gallant manner in which they were overcome, a notable episode in the history of the British Navy.

" Of the many expeditions up the bays and rivers of the United States during the late war," writes James, " none equalled in brilliancy of execution that of the Potomac to Alexandria." This service was entrusted to Captain James Alexander Gordon, of the 38-gun frigate *Sea-Horse*, having under his orders the *Euryalus* (Captain Napier being his second-in-command), the bomb-ships *Devastation* (Captain Thomas Alexander), *Ætna* (Captain Richard Kenah), and *Meteor* (Captain Samuel Roberts), the rocket ship *Erebus* (Captain David Bartholomew) and the

* " Sea Power in its Relations to the War of 1812." " I have much at heart," wrote Cochrane to the Admiralty, " to give them [the Americans] a complete drubbing before peace is made."

Anna Maria, a small tender or dispatch-boat. At 9.15 a.m. on August 18, this squadron got under way from the anchorage at the entrance to the Potomac, and, without the aid of pilots, began the ascent of the river.

Some twenty years afterwards Charles Napier himself contributed a most graphic account of this daring enterprise to the *United Service Magazine*, from which we need make no apology for borrowing some of the more interesting passages :

"The River Potomac," he writes, "is navigable for frigates as high up as Washington, but the navigation is extremely intricate, and Nature has done much for the protection of the country by placing, one third of the way up, very extensive and intricate shoals, called the 'Kettle-Bottoms.' They are composed of oyster banks of various dimensions, some not larger than a boat, with passages between them.

"The best channel is on the Virginia shore, but the charts gave us mostly very bad directions, and no pilots could be procured. A frigate had attempted some time before to effect a passage, and, after being frequently aground, gave it up as impossible. The American frigates themselves never attempted it with their guns in, and were several weeks in the passage from the naval yard at Washington to the mouth of the Potomac.

"The evening of the second day brought this little squadron, without any accident, to the entrance of the 'Kettle-Bottoms.' We were fully aware of the difficulties we had to encounter, but were determined to conquer them if possible.

"The *Sea-Horse*, keeping the Virginian shore on board, led, the *Euryalus* and the rest of the squadron following.

"The wind was light, and several boats were ahead sounding. As long as the soundings were good no apprehension was entertained; but, being aware of the smallness of the obstructions, it appeared impossible, if the ship ahead found a passage, that those astern could not be brought up. We were, however, mistaken. The *Euryalus* opened the ball, and struck, or rather was suddenly brought up, for nothing was felt, and the lead gave us plenty of water.

"No one could tell where she hung; there was abundance of water astern, ahead, all round, and yet the ship was immovable. A diver went down, and found, to the astonishment of all on board, that an oyster-bank, not bigger than a boat, was under her bilge. The boats had missed it with the lead, and the *Sea-Horse* had passed perhaps by a few feet on the other side."

After some hard heaving, she was floated, and the squadron weighed, proceeding very cautiously, having several boats abreast of each other, with leads going ahead of the ships. But, notwithstanding all this care, the *Sea-Horse* grounded on a

sand-bank; nor could she be got off until a great part of her provisions and eight or ten of her guns had been hoisted out. Several of the other ships also ran aground, but were got off with more ease. The next day was spent in getting in the frigate's provisions and guns, sounding the channel, and preparing to warp, in the event of the wind being foul.

On the 19th, the squadron again weighed, with a favourable breeze, and the Kettle-Bottoms were cleared before dark, without any serious difficulty, though all the ships were occasionally ashore.

The following morning, the wind being foul, the signal was made to warp. This operation continued for five days, during which the squadron warped upwards of fifty miles, and on the evening of the fifth day anchored off Maryland Point.

"The same day," continues Napier, "the public buildings at Washington were burnt. The reflection of the fire in the heavens was plainly seen from the ships, much to our mortification and disappointment, as we concluded that that act was committed at the moment of evacuating the town. It was, nevertheless, decided to proceed; and, as the next reach was sufficiently wide to beat through, although the water was very shoal, we anticipated some relaxation from our toils.

"In the course of the day I landed, with a flag of truce, at an agreeable-looking residence—the first, indeed, we had observed on the banks of the river, for the country was thickly wooded, and few habitations visible. The owner was an American farmer—not the most polished man in the world. He had two daughters, rather homely, and as uncouth as himself. They 'guessed' we would not go farther than Maryland Point, as the water was shoal; seemed to know and care very little about what was going on; offered us a glass of peach brandy, and hoped the 'Britishers' would not carry off their negroes, which appeared to be their only apprehension."

On the morning of the 22nd, the squadron weighed and was beating up Maryland Reach, when it was struck by a violent north-west squall. The *Sea-Horse* had her mizen-mast sprung, while the *Euryalus*, just as she had clewed up her sails to be in readiness to receive it, had her bowsprit and the head of her foremast badly sprung, and the heads of all three topmasts carried away.

"Captain Gordon thought the game up," continues Napier, "but he was assured we should be refitted before the other ships joined. At half-past one the hands were called, the wreck cleared, bowsprit hoisted on board, a new one made out of a topmast; new cross-trees and trussle-trees made and fitted; and, although we did not work after dark, next

day at one o'clock we were all a-taut, and weighed as the two sternmost vessels passed; * it was calm, and the boats, manned with marines, towed the ship, as the seamen were setting up the rigging. At dark the squadron anchored for the night.

"The following morning, to our great joy, the wind became fair, and we made all sail up the river, which now assumed a more pleasing aspect. At five o'clock in the afternoon, Mount Vernon—the retreat of the illustrious Washington—opened to our view, and showed us, for the first time since we entered the Potomac, a gentleman's residence. Higher up the river, on the opposite side, Fort Washington appeared to our anxious eyes, and, to our great satisfaction, it was considered assailable."

A little before sunset the squadron anchored just out of gunshot, and the bomb-ships immediately began throwing their shells into the fort, preparatory to an attack the next morning by the two frigates. On the bursting of the first shells, the garrison, to the great surprise of the British, retreated from the fort; but, suspecting some ruse, Captain Gordon directed the fire to be continued. At 8 p.m., however, a violent explosion occurred, which destroyed the inner buildings and left the populous town of Alexandria open to the squadron, without the loss of a man.

"It was too late," observes Napier, "to ascertain whether this catastrophe was occasioned by one of our shells, or whether it had been blown up by the garrison; but the opinion was in favour of the latter. Still, we were at a loss to account for so extraordinary a step.† The position was good, and its capture would have cost us at least fifty men, and more, had it been properly defended; besides, an unfavourable wind and many other chances were in their favour, and we could only have destroyed it had we succeeded in the attack.

"At dawn the ships moored under the fort and completed its destruction. The guns had already been spiked by the enemy, and their complete mutilation, together with their carriages, was effected by the seamen and marines of the squadron."

Shortly afterwards a deputation from the Common Council of Alexandria arrived, under a flag of truce, with a proposal to capitulate; but Captain Gordon prudently declined entering into any arrangements, "until," as he wrote to Cochrane, "I

* "Such was the state of discipline on board the ship, that in twelve hours the *Euryalus* had refitted herself and was again under way, ascending the river." —James: "Naval History of Great Britain," vol. VI.

† So were the American military authorities; and the commander of the garrison of Fort Washington was brought before a court-martial and cashiered.

was enabled to place the shipping in such a position as would ensure assent to the conditions I had decided to enforce."

The channel was buoyed, and next morning, August 28, the squadron anchored abreast of the town, when Captain Gordon proceeded to dictate his terms, which were of the most peremptory and humiliating kind.

It was in vain that the Americans had sunk their vessels; they must get them up again and put them in the state in which they were when the British squadron passed the Kettle-Bottoms. The owners of the vessels must send on board their furniture without delay; merchandise that had been removed must be brought back, and the merchants must load their vessels, which would be towed off by the captors. To these conditions the Common Council of Alexandria was obliged to consent, and by September 1 all the sunken vessels, with one exception, had been hove down, caulked, rigged and loaded, and were ready to quit the anchorage. They numbered twenty-one sail, all of which were loaded with flour and tobacco, but 200,000 barrels had to be left behind, for want of transport.

Meanwhile, Captain Gordon had learned that the expedition against Washington had, after destroying Commodore Barney's flotilla, made a forced march on that city, defeated the Americans at Bladensburg, destroyed the public buildings and naval yard at Washington, and retreated to their ships. "Had our little squadron been favoured by wind," writes Captain Napier, "the retreat would have been made along the right bank of the Potomac, under our protection, and the whole country in the course of that river would have been laid under contribution."

After the British had retired from Washington, the Americans, recovering from the panic which appeared to have stricken them, took vigorous measures to oppose Captain Gordon's return down the Potomac. The celebrated Commodore Rodgers, with a strong body of seamen from the *Guerrière* at Philadelphia, Captains Perry and Porter, and other officers and men from the *Constellation* at Norfolk, the men who had belonged to Commodore Barney's flotilla, regular troops, riflemen, artillery and militia, all flocked to the shores of the Potomac, "to punish the base incendiaries." The newspapers feasted their readers for some days on confident predictions of the destruction of the

British squadron: "It is impossible that ships can pass such formidable batteries, commanded by our naval heroes and manned by our invincible seamen. We'll teach them how to draw up terms of capitulation," and so forth.

On August 31, early in the morning, the British 18-gun brig-sloop *Fairy* (Captain Henry Baker), joined Captain Gordon, with Sir Alexander Cochrane's orders for his return, and confirmed the rumours that had already reached him that batteries were being erected and a large military force collected, to intercept, if possible, the descent of the squadron. She reported that, when in sight of Mount Vernon, a large portion of underwood had suddenly disappeared, and a severe fire of guns and muskets had been opened upon her, though, fortunately, without causing any serious damage.

The same day, without waiting to destroy the merchandise which it had not the means to bring away, the squadron weighed and started on its return, with its prizes. Contrary winds again obliged the British to resort to the laborious operation of warping the ships down the channel of the river, and a day's delay occurred, through the grounding of the *Devastation*. Taking advantage of this circumstance, the Americans attempted the destruction of that bomb-ship by means of three fire-vessels; but their object was defeated by the promptitude and gallantry of her commander, Captain Alexander, who pushed off with his own boats, and, being followed by those of the other ships, compelled the enemy to face about.

Notwithstanding that the *Meteor* and the *Fairy*, assisted by the dispatch-boat, a prize gunboat, and a boat from the *Euryalus* carrying a howitzer, which had been sent down the river to impede the progress of the Americans in their works, had greatly hindered operations, the enemy had succeeded in mounting eleven guns and in building a furnace for heating shot. On the 3rd, the *Ætna* and *Erebus* were sent to the assistance of the ships who were endeavouring to intercept the construction of the battery; and the following day the whole of the prizes and the squadron, with the exception of the *Devastation*, which was still five miles up the river, were assembled under Mount Vernon, and about four miles from the White House Battery, as it was called.

Another attempt was made to destroy the *Devastation* at night,

and the boats, under the orders of Captain Baker, of the *Fairy*, were sent to her assistance. The fire-vessels were discovered in a creek close to her and vigorously attacked; but it was found impossible to dislodge them from the position they had taken up, covered by a number of soldiers in a thick wood. A lieutenant and eight or ten men were killed or wounded in this attempt; but the *Devastation* was brought down safely to the squadron's anchorage.

"On the 5th, at noon," writes Napier, "the wind became fair, and the signal was made to weigh. The *Sea-Horse* and *Euryalus* led. A heavy but ill-directed fire was opened from the battery; both ships anchored within musket-shot, and soon silenced them; but it was quite impossible to dislodge the numerous body of sharpshooters, who were under cover of the trees, and did considerable execution through the ports. The frigates were followed by the bomb-ships, who discharged, in passing, their mortars loaded with musket-balls, and took up a position to cover the retreat. The *Fairy* took charge of the convoy, and passed them all without damage. The Americans fought under a white flag, bearing the words 'Free Trade and Sailors' Rights,' and behaved remarkably well; but their efforts were useless.

"As the prizes passed, we slipped our cables; the bomb-ships followed, and we calculated all was over for that day. We were mistaken. The *Fairy* and prizes were observed to anchor suddenly a few miles further down, having discovered fresh batteries, and the *Erebus*, in endeavouring to pass, grounded and drew a sharp fire upon her from the defences that were constructed along a high ridge of hills. We had just time to prepare to anchor as we got within range; the *Sea-Horse* went further, and was obliged to move; boats were sent to the *Erebus*, and the *Fairy* took up a position to draw the fire from her; but before she was afloat she suffered considerably.

"From fourteen to eighteen guns were mounted in this new position, and a considerable interruption was expected. In the morning we weighed, the *Sea-Horse* leading, and the *Euryalus* bringing up the rear, and were agreeably surprised at being allowed to pass quietly. We ascertained afterwards that the batteries were hardly finished, and the powder and shot had been expended the night before.

"No further interruption took place on the part of the Americans, and the squadron and prizes repassed the Kettle-Bottoms without grounding, with the exception of the *Euryalus*, who, though as nearly right astern the *Sea-Horse* as possible, struck upon one the former had missed, and was two days before she was disengaged, having been ashore on different banks four or five times.

"This expedition lasted twenty-three days. The hammocks were only down twice—each ship was ashore at least twenty times; but nothing could exceed the patience and good conduct of the ships' companies; and, though every encouragement was held out by the inhabitants

of Alexandria to induce the men to desert, there were only four or five out of the whole squadron who remained behind. The total loss was seven killed and thirty-five wounded."

The difficulties and dangers of this undertaking may be gauged from the fact that, some time previously, the American frigate *President* did not, although, of course, unopposed, succeed in accomplishing the same task under forty-two days, and, in doing this, was obliged to take out her guns.

The British Government appears to have appreciated very highly the gallantry and skill displayed by the squadron, and Captain Gordon was very justly made a K.C.B., while all the commanders were posted and the first lieutenants of the *Sea-Horse* and *Euryalus* promoted. But, though Captain Gordon bore the most generous testimony to the merits of his second-in-command, declaring that " to Captain Napier I owe more obligations than I have words to express," the latter received nothing for his exertions but a wound in the neck, received on September 8th, during the action with the American batteries, which caused him to walk with a stoop for the rest of his life.

A few days after his return from the expedition up the Potomac, Napier was actively engaged in seconding the operations against Baltimore, and on September 13, with nine boats under his command, he ascended the Ferry branch of the Patapsco, for the purpose of creating a diversion which might facilitate the intended assault on the enemy's entrenched camp on the other side of the city. Making his way for a considerable distance above Fort McHenry, he succeeded, by the feint of a landing, in drawing down a considerable number of troops to the shore. But, for reasons into which we need not enter here, the expedition against Baltimore was abandoned, and the British troops began their retreat whilst Captain Napier was actually preparing the way for the projected assault.

After refitting at Halifax, the *Euryalus* appears to have been generally employed in cruising off the North American coast, and in January, 1815 was stationed off Norfolk Island. Whilst there, Captain Napier, learning that the United States frigate *Constellation* was lying in Norfolk Harbour, and burning to emulate the exploit of Captain Broke, of the *Shannon*, in his challenge to, and capture of, the *Chesapeake*, addressed to

Captain Charles Gordon, the commander of the *Constellation*, the following letter :

" SIR,—I did myself the honour of making a communication to you, through Mr. Cassis, Lieutenant of the United States ship under your command, some days ago, and he having addressed to me your wish that it shall be in writing—unwilling as I am to give a formal challenge—I cannot help expressing my wish to meet the *Constellation*, and request you will inform me your time and place of meeting, which I shall accept, if in my power. Our force is twenty-six 18-pounders, twelve 32-pounder carronades, one 29-pounder. Complement, 294 men and boys.

" I trust, sir, you will believe that I have no personal hostility to you, and I have no other wish than to perform a grateful service to my country, and, from what I have heard of the character of Captain Gordon, I give him full credit for the same feelings.—I have the honour, etc.,

" CHARLES NAPIER."

This challenge was promptly accepted by the American officer, and a Mr. Littleton W. Farrawell, a citizen of Norfolk, authorized to make the necessary arrangements with Captain Napier. But, greatly to the latter's disappointment, and no doubt to that of Captain Gordon also, peace intervened and prevented the proposed duel between the two frigates.

Towards the end of the previous year, Napier had suffered a severe loss through the death of his mother, to whom he was tenderly attached. In consequence of this sad event, Merchistoun Hall and estate reverted to him, and was sold by his directions before his return to England.

Shortly after the conclusion of peace, the *Euryalus* was ordered home, and it appears to have been the intention of the Government to give Napier the command of a body of seamen, which was to co-operate as pontoon-builders with the Duke of Wellington's army in Belgium. With this object, additional officers were appointed, and the crew increased to four hundred picked men, and Napier was highly elated at the prospect of what was always a great source of delight to him—a " little soldiering ashore." Just, however, as the frigate was on the point of sailing for Antwerp, orders arrived countermanding her departure, as the scheme had been abandoned.

Napier, who had made all his preparations for the ensuing campaign, even to the length of purchasing horses, was,

of course, bitterly disappointed, and he would appear to have written to Wellington protesting against the decision of the Government, as the papers left by him contain the following memorandum from the Duke :—

" The Duke of Wellington presents his compliments to Captain Napier.
" The Government and the Admiralty are the best judges whether any part of the Navy shall be employed with this army, and it is impossible for him to enter into correspondence with any officer upon the subject.
" Brussels, *ce** 23 May, 1815."

As some compensation for the loss of this opportunity of winning laurels ashore, on June 4 following Captain Napier received the Companionship of the Bath—a somewhat tardy recognition of his many meritorious services. Shortly afterwards, the *Euryalus* having been paid off, and there being every prospect of his enjoying a long spell ashore, he married Eliza, only daughter of Lieutenant Younghusband, R.N., and widow of Lieutenant Edward Elers, R.N. †

Lieutenant Younghusband, who came of an old Northumbrian family, had, after retiring from the active duties of his profession, been employed in the impress service under Captain the Hon. Charles Napier, the father of the subject of the present memoir, and it was then that the intimacy between the two families began. By his marriage with Miss Hall, a Cornish lady, from the neighbourhood of Penzance, Lieutenant Younghusband had four children—three sons and the daughter who

* It is thus written in the original.

† The Elers family was of Saxon origin, and traced its descent from a certain Admiral Elers, a member of a noble Saxon family, and commander of the fleet at Hamburg, who married a lady of the princely house of Baden. The admiral's son, Martin Elers, quitted his native town and settled in Amsterdam, of which town he became burgomaster, and is said to have entertained the exiled Queen Henrietta Maria. Two of his sons, John Philip and David, came to London, probably in 1688, in the train of the Prince of Orange. At Bradwell, in Staffordshire, John Philip discovered the fine red clay suitable for producing red ware in imitation of the oriental hard-red pottery which was being imported by the East India Companies into England, and shortly afterwards he established a manufactory near Burslem, the productions of which were disposed of by David Elers, who had a shop in the Poultry, in London. It is now generally admitted that the brothers Elers were the introducers of salt-glazing into Staffordshire, though they do not seem to have worked at it themselves. John Philip Elers had a son Paul, who married Mary, daughter and heiress of Edward Hungerford, of Blackbourton Court, Oxford, by whom he became the father of Lieutenant Edward Elers, Mrs. Napier's first husband, and of Maria, wife of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, and mother of Maria Edgeworth, the novelist.

had now become Mrs. Napier. The eldest and youngest of the boys, George and Delaval, followed their father's profession, though the latter retired from it after a few years. George, however, served with great distinction, chiefly in the West Indies, and had risen to the rank of post-captain, when, at the early age of thirty, his career was unhappily cut short by death. In recognition of the services rendered by him in the protection of their trade, a large number of West Indian merchants (who had previously presented him with a valuable piece of plate) raised by subscription a handsome monument to his memory, in the parish church of Berwick, his birth-place. The second son, Charles, entered the Royal Artillery, served for a considerable time in the West Indies, and subsequently with the Allied armies in France, and eventually reached the rank of General.

Charles Napier had been devotedly attached to his future wife—a singularly beautiful and charming woman—from boyhood; and, on learning that she had become a widow, lost no time in seeking her out and offering her his hand. A less bold man might well have demurred as to the expediency of proposing marriage to a widow with four young children—two boys and two girls—the eldest only six years old. But the impetuous and chivalrous sailor never hesitated a moment, and blithely took upon himself all the responsibilities of a parent to the little Elers, who shortly afterwards added the name of Napier to their own patronymic. And these responsibilities, heavy though they must have been at times, he discharged in a manner which is beyond all praise.

CHAPTER V

TRAVELS AND RESIDENCE ON THE CONTINENT

AFTER their marriage Napier and his wife resided for a few weeks at a pleasant house at Alverstoke, in Hampshire. But, on learning of the occupation of Paris by the Allied armies, the former, who had soon begun to tire of the monotony of country life in summer time, was seized with a desire to visit the French capital.

Fearing that Mrs. Napier, who was in delicate health, might be unwilling to undertake so long a journey, he had recourse to a little ruse in order to obtain her consent. "He persuaded her," writes his only daughter, the late Mrs. Jodrell, in a biography of her father which she began, but, unfortunately, never completed, "to leave the children with their old and valued nurse and go in his curricle just as far as Brighton, and take a small box with nightdress, in case they did not return. As soon as he got to Brighton, he made a promise that if she would cross the Channel, he would take her to Paris, leave her there, under the care of her brother (then Major Younghusband) and his cousin, Colonel William Napier, who were both there with the Allied army, and return to England and bring back the nurse and children. She consented. . . ."

They accordingly embarked on board a packet bound for Calais—curricle, horses and all—but, on reaching that port, were at first refused permission to land, as Napier, in his haste, had omitted to provide himself with the necessary passports. Eventually, however, this obstacle was overcome, and on July 29 they left Calais and proceeded by easy stages towards the capital.

Paris was then so crowded that they had great difficulty in securing accommodation of any kind, and it was only after a long and tiring search that they succeeded in obtaining a small

apartment *au quatrième*. They did not, however, remain more than a few days in these upper regions, when they removed to a château beautifully situated, amidst shady woods, at Viroflay, a couple of miles from Versailles, with which they were so charmed that they decided to rent it for several months. Having installed his wife in this delightful retreat, under the care of Major Younghusband and Colonel William Napier, Napier returned to England to bring over the children and their old nurse, Mary Branksome.

It was a somewhat precarious situation for a lady to be placed in, as her brother and Colonel Napier's military duties prevented them from spending much time at the château, and marauders from the different Allied armies were scouring the surrounding country, and, with the exception of the British troops, committing all kinds of outrages. Shortly before the Napiers' arrival at Viroflay, parties of Russian and Prussian soldiers had visited the château, and, not content with carrying off everything portable, had committed a great deal of wanton destruction, smashing the chandeliers and pier-glasses to fragments, riddling the ceilings with bullets, and driving their bayonets through valuable paintings.

One night, not long after Captain Napier's departure, his wife, who slept in the house with only one maidservant—the other servants sleeping in an annexe of the château—was aroused by a violent knocking at the door, and, to her great dismay, five bearded Cossacks forced their way into the house, and, having proceeded to make themselves quite at home in the salon, demanded by signs something to eat and drink.

With great presence of mind, Mrs. Napier, dissembling her alarm, waited on her uninvited guests herself, having previously despatched the maid to the stables, with orders to the groom to saddle a horse and ride off as fast as he could to summon Major Younghusband. The latter, on his arrival, found his sister still playing the part of waitress to the Cossacks, who, save that they were becoming a little elated by the liquor which they had consumed, were behaving very well.

Having ascertained the detachment to which the jovial party belonged, and that it was quartered in the village of Viroflay, Major Younghusband went away to find the officer in charge of it, and returned with him to the château, when the intruders

were very quickly packed off, and a corporal's guard stationed in one of the outhouses to protect Mrs. Napier from further annoyance.

Napier shortly afterwards returned, bringing with him the four children and their old nurse, and the remainder of the summer passed very pleasantly.

In the autumn, Mrs. Napier's delicate health necessitating a change to a milder climate, her husband decided to spend the winter at Naples, and "got under weigh" for the South, the children and their nurse travelling by diligence or *en poste* until Geneva was reached, when a four-wheeled carriage and serviceable horse were purchased for their use, while Captain and Mrs. Napier travelled in the curricle. "This vehicle," Mrs. Jodrell tells us, "her father had built at Fareham, especially for travelling."

"It was called his 'three-decker,' and was handsome and roomy; three steps to the body; a dicky behind; carrying in the sweep huge boxes; a large imperial on the top. The lining was of blue cloth, the body painted sky-blue; red wheels, and drawn by four horses. The coachman, who rejoiced in the name of Petit-Jean, appears to have been quite a character in his way. Once, on being sharply reprimanded by Captain Napier for having attended to his own wants at the end of the day's journey without waiting to see the horses properly rubbed down, he replied: '*Ah, monsieur! vous pouvez remplacer les chevaux, mais vous ne retrouverez pas un autre Petit-Jean.*"

At that time the roads in many parts of Italy were infested by brigands, and travellers were continually being "held up," plundered of all they had about them, and, in some instances, carried off into the mountains, and kept there until ransomed by their friends. But, although Captain Napier disdained the services of an escort, even in those localities which were considered most unsafe, they were not molested, and reached Naples in safety, their only adventures by the way being the narrow escape of the old nurse, Mary Branksome, who was nearly lost in a snow-storm while crossing the Simplon, and a disturbance between Captain Napier and the cook of a little *albergo* in the Roman States.

"What provocation the cook received I cannot now recall," writes General Elers Napier, "but, armed with a long carving knife, he pursued Captain Napier into the room where we were

all assembled to dine; and I can now picture the fellow, with his shirt sleeves tucked up, and a cotton night-cap on his head, fiercely brandishing the formidable weapon in his hand; whilst Captain Napier seized a heavy wooden chair in self-defence. Mischief would probably have ensued had not the *padrone* and the *cameriere*—mine host and the waiter—rushed in with much noise and gesticulation, parted the combatants, and put an end to the fray."

At Naples the Napiers rented a charming villa, situated on the heights of Vomero and commanding a view of the lovely bay and Mount Vesuvius, whose fiery emanations were a constant theme of wonder and curiosity to the children.

During their stay at Naples, Mrs. Napier gave birth to a son, who was named Charles Stewart, after Captain Charles Stewart, R.N., an old friend and comrade-in-arms of Captain Napier, who also happened to be visiting Italy at this time.

When the summer came, the Napiers made many pleasant excursions to Caserta, Castellamare, Mount Vesuvius, Pompeii, Herculaneum, Capri, Ischia, and other places of interest in the neighbourhood. In one of their expeditions to Ischia, which was made in a large open boat, a most alarming incident occurred.

The boat was becalmed, and the party was obliged to remain at sea until very late at night. Charles Elers Napier—Mrs. Napier's younger son by her first husband—then a delicate child between three and four years of age, was seized with a violent attack of croup, which threatened to carry him off before they could reach the shore. Captain Napier, however, stripping off his coat, wrapped it round the suffering child, so as to protect him from the night air, and then, seizing an oar, he began to row furiously, at the same time stimulating the boatmen by promises of reward to follow his example. By their united exertions they succeeded in gaining the shore in time to obtain medical aid and save the little boy's life.

Towards the close of the summer, as Napier was becoming impatient for a change of scene, it was decided that they should resume their travels. To obviate the inconvenience consequent on dividing the party, a large travelling-carriage was bought, with a very high driving-seat and an equally elevated rumble behind. Two new horses were also purchased, one of which,

called "Murat," had formerly been a charger of that most dashing of cavalry leaders, Joachim Murat, the late King of Naples.

Their preparations completed, they set off, Captain Napier acting as charioteer, with his elder step-son sitting beside him on the driving-seat, and Mrs. Napier and the rest of the family inside; while in the rumble behind sat the coachman, a German named Johann Schwartz, who had replaced Petit-Jean, and was noted for his taciturnity, his great strength, and—what was indeed rare among the Jehus of those days—his sobriety.

They journeyed in leisurely fashion, stopping for a day or two wherever they came to a place of particular beauty or interest, and making occasional riding expeditions—for they had brought saddles with them—to visit localities off the beaten track, or in the mountains, which were impracticable for a carriage. Thus, it was not until towards the close of the year that they arrived at Rome.

Napier took a lively interest in the antiquarian researches that were then being carried on in the "Eternal City" and its neighbourhood, and, in company with his wife, examined carefully everything worthy of being seen, while he made a point of studying the works of the best writers on these subjects.

"He always," writes General Elers Napier, "took more pleasure in statuary than in any other branch of the fine arts—for painting he never seemed to have much taste; and expressed his opinions of the performances of some of the most celebrated painters in terms that horrified not a few of the English 'dilettanti' with whom he had become acquainted. His abhorrence of anything approaching to cruelty extended to representations of crucifixions and martyrdoms—so often favourite subjects with the Old Masters; and some of these productions he condemned in no measured terms, without regard to the opinions of the artistic world, or the judgment of the most acknowledged 'connoisseurs' of the day. . . . I will here record a few of his many criticisms on painting, which he expressed as openly and with as much confidence as if he had been commenting on the rig and appearance of an enemy's man-of-war from his own quarter-deck.

"'Now just look at that fellow!' he would say, pointing to an ecstatic amateur, standing in well-feigned or real rapture before the recognized *chef d'œuvre* of some old painter, whose performance it was rank heresy to decry—'look at him, throwing himself into all the attitudes of a dancing-master, in front of that black, ugly-looking daub, as unpleasant to behold as to see a poor devil tied up to the gratings and writhing under the boatswain's lash. Tell him it is only fit to be used as a target; he

will open his eyes and exclaim: "It is the work of Domenichino, of Guercino, or Annibale Caracci,"' at the same time widely distending his mouth, to imitate the emphatic pronunciation of the horrified admirer of the fine arts."

The Napiers, after spending a short time in Rome, continued their journey northwards, visiting Florence, Leghorn and Pisa, at which last-named town they were obliged very unwillingly to prolong their stay, owing to a most unpleasant incident, which occasioned Captain Napier a vast amount of trouble and inconvenience. But let us listen to his own written statement of this affair, which was translated into Italian and read before the court at Pisa:

"In December, 1816, I arrived at Pisa and stopped my carriage close to the Tribunal of Justice, and went in search of lodgings. Two men came up and offered their assistance. I said I only had occasion for one. They both answered it was the same thing. I took one, who was with me about two hours, and found me a lodging and stabling, and afterwards carried my luggage into the house; for which service I gave him two paoli, with which payment he was not satisfied, and absolutely refused to leave the house. I then forced him out of the door. After I had returned to the room, another man came and demanded money. I told him I knew nothing of him, and insisted on his leaving the house immediately. This he would not do, on which I went to the chimney and seized a piece of wood, as well to protect myself as to thrust him out of the door, and was in the act of shutting it, when the first man rushed past him and seized me by the collar. I started back and liberated myself, brandishing my weapon for a considerable time, keeping him at bay without striking. But they still persisted in attacking me, one of them taking up a chair to strike me, and the other endeavouring to close with me. I was obliged to use my weapon, and, in consequence, broke the man's arm, which, however, I did not know till informed by the police when before the judge at Pisa for examination; and what is inserted in the process as my declaration is curtailed and mutilated, and the whole sense changed. And I further declare, on my solemn honour, that I used the weapon solely in defending myself against a most insolent attack, and, though I have been in many actions, and have been three times wounded, I never was before in such fear of my life.

"After the fraças had taken place at my house, I went over to the Tribunal to relate the circumstances, and, on crossing the bridge, was attacked by a whole tribe of *vetturini*, who frequent that place, and had I not made the best of my way to the Tribunal, I should have been either murdered or thrown over the bridge."

General Elers Napier, who accompanied his step-father to the Tribunal, having been sent by Mrs. Napier—who probably

imagined that it might be a sort of safeguard to be in the company of a child, who could not possibly be an object of enmity to the mob—gives a most dramatic account of this unpleasantly exciting journey :

" When we sallied forth into the street, we were received with shouts and threats and maledictions from the assembled multitude—*facchini, vetturini*, and other vagabonds of every sort; and I must own that I began to feel a little ' queer.' Captain Napier, however, encouragingly taking me by the hand, made his way through the mob, and advanced at a quick pace across the bridge, under which, in revolving eddies, the broad Arno rolled its deep and turbid winter stream.

" There appeared to be a moment of hesitation among the crowd, as, casting his eye behind him, Captain Napier told me to ' walk as fast as I possibly could, but not to run.' Then came on a sudden and apparently spontaneous move—for the dark and motley mass now advanced rapidly behind us along the bridge, whose centre arch we had by this time nearly attained. It was an exciting moment, as the idea suddenly flashed across my mind that we might in a few seconds be struggling in the deep and rapid waters below. I strictly obeyed orders, and endeavoured, with lengthened strides, to keep at a walk, and never did I walk with such a will. We had thus gained some advance on our pursuers, when, with a terrific yell, they made a forward rush ! Our fate hung upon a straw.

" ' Now, hold on by me and run for your life ! ' said Captain Napier, suiting the action to the word. It was evidently a race for life ; although we had a considerable start, the rabble now rapidly gained on us at every step—for Captain Napier's movements were much impeded, not only by myself, but by his lameness, the result of the fracture which his leg had formerly sustained. Straining, however, every nerve, breathless and exhausted, we reached the portico of the Tribunal, as the foremost of the pursuers was close upon our heels.

" A sentry stood at the door. Captain Napier, with a sudden jerk, flung me behind him, wrenched the musket out of the soldier's hands and brought it down to the charge. The result was instantaneous ; it effectually arrested the rush of that savage and cowardly mob, and enabled us to take refuge within the precincts of the building, which happened also to be the Town Hall."

Napier was advised by the Chancellor, before whom he appeared next day, to compromise the affair ; but this he positively refused to do ; adding that " he had been violently attacked in his own house by two men, and that he could not conceive why he should pay a man money who had been wounded in attacking him." He had, he tells us, a still more powerful reason for not compromising it, which was that he saw that the authorities were impressed with the idea that he was the aggressor, and

" no man who had any regard for his own honour and character would suffer himself to continue under such an imputation."

It is eminently characteristic of Napier that he preferred to submit to an immense amount of annoyance and inconvenience, and to remain several months in the neighbourhood of Pisa, whilst awaiting his trial by the superior court for " assault and battery," than, by compromising the affair, allow it to be thought that he might have been in the wrong, when he knew himself to be in the right.

While the affair was pending, bail having been accepted, he took a house for his family at the Baths of St. Julian, a few miles from Pisa, where he spent the winter of 1816–17; and it was while here that he began a series of letters on the state of the Navy, many of which were afterwards published in a collective form.* The trial at last came on, and resulted in an acquittal, upon which, satisfied with having vindicated his character, he made a handsome present to the man whose arm he had broken, which fully compensated him for the injury he had received.

This matter satisfactorily settled, the Napiers resumed their journey northwards, and after visiting Lucca and Bologna, they reached Venice, where they remained for some little time, less, it would appear, for the purpose of studying its antiquities than to allow Captain Napier the opportunity of reconnoitring the place and gauging the possibility of a fleet reducing the forts.

" For," writes his step-son, " he never for a single instant lost sight of professional objects or neglected opportunities that might be turned to account at some future time. . . . Captain Napier had never made a study of fortification or military drawing; he, nevertheless, possessed a capital eye for the features of ground from a military point of view, and never passed unheeded a strong position, a battery or a fort. His memory on such subjects, as in most others, was very retentive, and the result of his rough notes and rougher sketches had been a large collection of plans of nearly every maritime place of strength he had visited during his long and eventful career."

Leaving Venice, the Napiers traversed Lombardy, and, after visiting Lakes Como and Garda, again crossed the Alps and

* " The Navy, its Past and Present State," by Rear-Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B. Edited by Major-General Sir William Napier, K.C.B. London, 1851.

made their way to Vienna, by way of the Tyrol. In the Austrian capital they made but a short stay, and then continued their travels through Bohemia and Bavaria into Switzerland, and, after visiting various places of interest, settled, towards the end of 1817, at Vevey, on the borders of Lake Geneva.

It was here that, in March of the following year, Mrs. Napier gave birth to a daughter, who in October, 1843, married the Rev. Henry Jodrell, afterwards Rector of Gisleham, Suffolk. An amazing incident occurred at the child's baptism. Mrs. Napier had decided to call her little girl Héloïse, as Vevey and its neighbourhood was the scene of Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*. The worthy pastor, however, who performed the ceremony, was greatly shocked at the choice of such a name, and resolved not to countenance what he regarded as a scandal. Accordingly, when entering the name in the registry, he wrote Éloïse, instead of the name of Rousseau's heroine, in the certificate of baptism, much to the annoyance of Mrs. Napier.

During the winter of 1817–18, Napier employed himself in taking lessons in landscape-drawing from a Polish artist, who happened to be staying at Vevey, and in continuing those very able letters on the state of the Navy, to which reference has already been made. In his Preface he wrote :—

"I had no interested motives in writing the following letters. The Service knows well enough when a man puts himself forward to censure the Admiralty, he will inevitably bring down on himself their wrath; while, on the other hand, if he shuts his eyes to their follies, and exaggerates any good they do, he gets into favour. I have done what I thought my duty, regardless of frowns and favours, and I hope I have done it with moderation."

These letters, which exposed many gross abuses in the administration of the Navy, and suggested some very comprehensive plans for their remedy, were welcomed by all who had the welfare of the Service at heart; and it must have been very gratifying to the writer during the latter period of his life to reflect that a very considerable number of his proposals had been carried into effect.

Napier soon became tired of the inactivity of his life at Vevey, and resolved to endeavour to find an outlet for his superabundant energies in farming, for which purpose he rented a pretty house

ELIZA YOUNGHUSBAND, LADY NAPIER,
Wife of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.

[To face p. 60.

From a lithograph.

DOM PEDRO IV. OF PORTUGAL.

Afterwards the 1st Emperor of Brazil.

See p. 50.

To face p. 61.

not far from Geneva, with a good deal of land attached to it. But, though in later years he found great pleasure in agricultural pursuits, the restlessness of his temperament in these days would not allow him to engage in such an occupation for any length of time; and in the following winter he suddenly decided to leave Switzerland and settle in Paris.

Accordingly, the "Three Decker" was loosed from its moorings, and Napier steered for the French capital, which the party reached in safety, half-frozen with cold, for the winter was one of the most severe on record. Here a large and handsome house was engaged in the Rue Pigale, Chaussée d'Antin. where the family lived in a rather expensive style, Mrs. Napier's *salons* being thrown open on certain days to all their friends, Of these the frank, open-hearted sailor and his charming wife soon had a large circle, amongst whom may be mentioned Captain (afterwards Admiral Sir George) Sartorius, Colonel George Hodges—an old Peninsular friend of Captain Napier, subsequently much associated with him in Portugal and Syria—and the Spanish guerilla leader, General Mina.

Unhappily, amongst those who crowded to the *réunions* in the Rue Pigale were certain persons whose friendship was a great deal less desirable than these distinguished men, and one of them, "a shrewd and needy adventurer, who in a great measure depended on the ready exercise of his wits to keep up a tolerable appearance in society at the expense of the less suspicious of his more wealthy friends,"* persuaded Napier to embark in various speculations, the majority of which ended disastrously.

The most ruinous of these ventures proved to be that of establishing iron steamboats upon the Seine.

Wooden steamers were found to be unsuitable for the navigation of that river, and it was resolved to supersede them by the recently-invented iron vessels, in one of which Napier, starting from the Thames, adventurously crossed the Channel and proceeded up the Seine to Paris. "This fragile craft," writes General Elers Napier, "was flat-bottomed, drew very few inches of water, and was only calculated for inland navigation; her paddles, too, were so fixed at the stern that they were liable to be washed away by every sea, in the trough of which she

* General Elers Napier, "The Life and Letters of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.," vol. I., p. 120.

must then inevitably have been swamped. No little credit, therefore, is due to the intrepidity of the man who ventured in such a boat at an inclement season of the year. On his arrival at Paris, thousands flocked to see the eighth wonder of the world in the '*bateau à vapeur en fer*,' though it puzzled many of the spectators to conceive how such a material could possibly be made to float; and a greater number were more incredulous, and declared it was an imposture, as such a thing could never be."

Napier threw himself into this scheme with all the ardour of his active and enterprising nature, and, being the moneyed man of the company, and, at the same time, quite ignorant of business, was persuaded to spend freely for the good of the concern, on the confident assurance that he was bound to derive immense profits from the venture as soon as the initial difficulties had been overcome. The result was that his fortune, which had been a considerable one at the time of his arrival in Paris, gradually dwindled away, though his hopes were constantly buoyed up by his associates, whose interest it was not to allow him to despair of success so long as any part of it remained.

In the summer of 1820, the Napier family set out on a visit to England. The trial of Queen Caroline was then in progress, and on the arrival of the "Three Decker" in London its strange appearance and the presence of two swarthy foreign servants in the rumble aroused suspicions that the newcomers were some of the numerous Italian witnesses who were being summoned from abroad to substantiate the charges against the Queen. A rumour to this effect having quickly spread, a mob collected and followed the party with threatening cries to Piccadilly, where the travellers fortunately found shelter in Hatchett's Hotel before the hostility of the crowd had taken a more unpleasant form.

After remaining a short time in London, Napier rented a small country house called Bury Hall, near Alverstoke, where, it will be remembered, he had spent the first few weeks of his married life. But business of a pressing nature connected with the steamboat speculation soon summoned him away; and, leaving his family in their new home, he returned to Paris.

After a while his wife and children joined him, and they continued to live in the same expensive style as before, for, as Napier, notwithstanding many disappointments, was still as

confident as ever of ultimate success with his steamboats, he declined to curtail his expenditure.

Towards the end of the following year, a sad event occurred. Captain Napier's little son—a fine boy, then five years—was playing with his half-brothers, assisting to unload a wagon full of hay, upon the top of which they had climbed, when, missing his footing, he fell to the ground and sustained fatal injuries. He was buried in the cemetery of Père la Chaise. About the same time, his little sister Éloïse also met with an accident, but, happily, it resulted in nothing worse than a compound fracture of an arm. When the French surgeon who had been called in asked for a knife to cut the splints, the poor child burst into a passion of tears, being under the impression that he was about to cut off the injured limb.

In 1822, Napier, being at length obliged to recognize the necessity of curtailing expenses, gave up his Paris residence and took a house at Versailles, where his establishment was conducted on more modest lines. A still further reduction of expenditure soon, however, became imperative, and in the following year he removed to a small house at Ville d'Avray, near Saint-Cloud. In 1824, he paid a short visit to England, in order to place his elder step-son, who was to enter the Army, at Sandhurst, and spent most of his evenings when in London at the Naval Club, in Old Bond Street, fighting his battles over again, in the company of some of his old comrades-in-arms. In the summer of 1825, the unfortunate steamboat speculation having involved him in fresh losses, which absorbed nearly all that remained of his private fortune, he went with his family to reside near Le Havre, where he lived in a very humble and retired way compared with the style which he had maintained in Paris or even in the early days at Versailles.

At Le Havre the Napiers remained for two years, during which Napier obtained for his elder step-son an ensign's commission in the 46th Regiment, then stationed in India, and for the younger the appointment of midshipman in the Navy. In the summer of 1827, the steamboat bubble having completely burst, and there being no longer any reason for him to remain in France, he and his family returned to England and settled in Hampshire, at a small village called Rowland's Castle, near Havant, and not far from " Cherry's Grove," the estate which

he subsequently purchased and called Merchistoun, in memory of his Scottish home.

The house which he took at Rowland's Castle was a most unpretentious one—in fact, merely a cottage—and the neighbouring gentry did not even condescend to call on the poor half-pay officer, whom, as they drove past, they saw working in his garden without a coat, or engaged in the apparently endless task of filling up a deep ravine, which intersected a small field attached to his humble abode. For it was only in this way that he could find some outlet for his energies.

CHAPTER VI

THE "GALATEA"—VOYAGE TO THE WEST INDIES

WEARY of this monotonous kind of existence, Napier applied again and again for a ship, and even professed himself willing to accept a coastguard command. But, though furnished with the most flattering testimonials as to his former services from Sir Alexander Cochrane, Lord Exmouth and others, it was not until January, 1829, that his efforts to obtain employment were crowned with success, when he was appointed to the *Galatea*, a 42-gun frigate, which he commissioned at Portsmouth.

Napier received the news of his appointment with very mixed feelings. Naturally, he was much pleased at the prospect of hoisting his pennant again, after nearly fourteen years of enforced inactivity; but the *Galatea* was a poor kind of ship for an officer of his long and distinguished services, and his mortification was not diminished on learning, three or four weeks later, that Captain Waldegrave, an officer considerably junior to himself, had been appointed to the *Seringapatam*, a fine 46-gun frigate.

"I do not think you will call me fastidious," he writes to Sir George Cockburn, then one of the Lords of the Admiralty, "when I say that I really feel very much hurt, and, indeed, degraded, at being put into the *Galatea*, a ship that has the worst reputation in the Navy, and a younger captain than myself, in one month after, put into one of the best frigates.

"I am the oldest captain now in a frigate, and, I believe, without vanity, I may say that I have seen more service than all the frigate captains now employed put together; and my feelings must be blunt, indeed, did I not feel the degradation. No one can be a better judge of the feeling an officer ought to have than yourself, and I hope you will be good enough to mention this to Lord Melville. . . ."

Sir George Cochrane did mention it to Lord Melville, and was able to assure Captain Napier that the First Lord had appointed

him to the *Galatea* because he considered him anxious for employment, and he did not then foresee the probability of bringing forward another and larger ship. If, however, Captain Napier preferred waiting for another 46-gun frigate, his lordship would have no objection to his giving up the *Galatea*, though in that case he (Sir George Cockburn) feared that certain experiments with paddles which Captain Napier had received permission from the Admiralty to make on that vessel would have to be given up, as a larger and more valuable ship might not be considered a suitable subject for them.

This explanation, and still more the hint as to the paddle experiments, would appear to have reconciled Napier for the time being, at any rate, to his appointment to "the ship with the worst reputation in the Navy." For, since he had turned his attention to steam, the propulsion of ships of war by paddles had constantly occupied his thoughts, and he was exceedingly anxious to test the efficacy of his scheme.

Paddles had previously been tried in the 46-gun frigate *Active*, by Captain Ryder Burton. They were set in motion by means of the capstan; but the innovation was not persevered with, probably because of the severe labour this entailed upon the crew. Napier's plan was to work them by means of winches on each side, along the whole length of the main-deck, two-thirds of the ship's company being employed to work them at the same time.

He now applied himself to the fitting out of his new ship with his usual indefatigable energy; and, though at 6 a.m., on March 2, 1829, the *Galatea* had only her lower masts in, by 6 p.m. the same evening she was completely rigged, with royal yards crossed, notwithstanding that she was short of her complement by sixty men. For this smart piece of work her captain was highly complimented by the Duke of Clarence in an autograph letter, dated three days later:

"Whether *in* or *out* of office," wrote the Sailor Prince, "I must be equally interested in the welfare of the Navy, and I compliment you from *the bottom of my heart* on this event.

"I must now recommend the guns, for the great object of a man-of-war is fighting. I trust, and make no doubt, the officer who can thus rig a ship is equally able and willing to have his frigate ready to cope with the enemy."

Napier received other complimentary letters about this time from the same royal personage, who appears to have taken great interest in the paddle experiments. After the first trial at Spithead, in which the *Galatea* attained the speed of three knots, and went round another frigate towed by boats, and also a brig propelled with sweeps and likewise towed, the Duke wrote expressing himself perfectly satisfied with the result, and added: "I shall be anxious to hear more as you improve in your exercise."

The *Galatea* did not leave the home station for several months after being commissioned, during part of which time Napier's family lived on board her. Always detesting anything approaching idleness, her new captain, even whilst the vessel was in harbour or at Spithead, contrived to keep himself and the crew in a constant state of activity, at one time experimenting with the paddles, at others organizing a sham fight on Southsea Common, a disembarkation on the beach, or an attack on Southsea Castle or Lumps Fort. On such occasions, the *Galatea's* marines formed the garrison, while Captain Napier, at the head of the seamen, who were instructed in the use of small arms, led the attack. Thus, in a very short time he had brought the crew of the old frigate, as he invariably did that of every ship he commanded throughout his career, to a high state of efficiency.

Early in June, 1829, the *Galatea* was ordered to the West Indies, and on the 12th of that month she sailed from Spithead, having on board Captain and Commissioner Ayscough, R.N., and his family, who were on their way to Jamaica. On the 15th, after being delayed by a succession of calms, the vessel arrived at Le Havre, where Captain Napier was to land his own family; and when off the lighthouses to the northward of the mouth of the Seine, the paddles were shipped, all hands set to work at the winches, and the *Galatea* paddled into Havre at a speed of between three and four knots, to the astonishment and admiration of the townsfolk, amongst whom the gallant captain was well known.

Two days later, having taken farewell of his wife and family, Napier again put to sea, and, after touching at Funchal, in Madeira, where the paddles were again requisitioned, and cruising

for a time off the Cape de Verde Islands, on the look-out for some slavers that were expected in those latitudes, reached Carlisle Bay, Barbadoes, on August 11th. From Barbadoes the *Galatea* proceeded to St. Pierre, Martinique, and thence to Port Royal, Jamaica, where she arrived on the 24th.

At Port Royal Commissioner Ayscough and his family disembarked, and a few days later the *Galatea* sailed for Sacrificios, near Vera Cruz, where she remained for three weeks, and where Captain Napier entertained General Santa Anna, afterwards President of Mexico. Thence she sailed for Havannah, on leaving which port, her commander had again an opportunity of showing the efficiency and advantage of his paddles.

At the time fixed for the frigate's departure, the land breeze having entirely failed, the captains of several men-of-war which happened to be lying there, and who were aware of Captain Napier's intention to sail, very courteously offered the use of their respective boats to tow the *Galatea* out of harbour. Napier, however, with many expressions of thanks, declined, and, ordering the paddles to be shipped, succeeded in getting an offing without the use of a sail, to the great surprise of his brother-captains.

From Havannah the *Galatea* proceeded home, arriving at Spithead on December 4; and Napier, satisfied from his recent experiences of the great advantage with which paddles might be used on board men-of-war, applied, through Sir George Cockburn, for permission to fit a three-decker with this means of propulsion. His request, however, was not granted, but he continued to persevere in the matter.

On the last day of the year the *Galatea* entered Portsmouth harbour, where she remained for two months. At the end of February she was ordered out to Spithead, and spent the spring and early summer cruising in the Channel. This pleasant but uneventful occupation was very little to the taste of her captain, who had now taken for his family a pretty little house, with a small quantity of land attached to it, situated on Purbrook Heath, a few miles from Portsmouth, and, in the absence of more exciting employment afloat, would have preferred the comforts of home. "It is precious dull work sitting by myself in my cabin," he wrote to his wife under date April 9, 1830; "it makes one feel so lonely and deserted, and a thousand times

I have wished myself snug at Purbrook, where I hope and trust you are safe and well settled. . . . It is horrid work, and no prospect of doing anything, not even a smuggler."

While the *Galatea* remained at Spithead, Napier went several times to London, for the purpose of urging his plans respecting the paddles upon the Admiralty, and he also paid a visit to his relatives and friends in Scotland, whom he had not seen for nearly twenty years. On the expiration of his leave he rejoined the *Galatea*, which at the beginning of August sailed for Lisbon, where Captain Napier was instructed to demand the restitution of certain British vessels that had been detained by order of Dom Miguel, the *de facto* King of Portugal, and satisfaction from the Portuguese Government. At the same time, two frigates were sent to the Western Islands to restrain such lawless proceedings.

Napier appears to have executed this important and delicate mission with considerable dexterity and adroitness, and was not long in obtaining the satisfaction demanded by his Government, thus exemplifying the old saying that the best diplomatist is a British man-of-war. On her return from Lisbon, the *Galatea* was again employed for some weeks in cruising about the Channel; but in the middle of November she was despatched on another voyage to the West Indies, having on board Sir George Hill, Governor of St. Vincent.

On this occasion, Charles Elers Napier, who had lately been transferred from his first ship, the *Ganges*, to the *Galatea*, sailed with his step-father as a midshipman, although his appointment was only intended to be of a temporary nature, as Napier entertained a strong dislike to what he called "family ships," *i.e.*, those having on board connections or relatives of the captain. Nevertheless, young Napier remained in the *Galatea* until she was paid off two years later, when he passed his lieutenant's examination.

The winds were light, and it was not until January 7, 1831, that Barbadoes was reached; but the tedium of the voyage was relieved by dancing, games and whatever amusements could be devised, in which Captain Napier, we are told, joined with the greatest glee, for, though a strict disciplinarian, he recognized the importance of encouraging good-fellowship and sociability on board the ships which he commanded; and after evening

quarters the boatswain used to pipe "all hands up to dance and skylark."

The *Galatea* remained two days at Barbadoes, which had been one of Napier's favourite stations in his earlier days, and where a ball was hastily arranged in honour of his arrival, and then proceeded to St. Vincent, to land the Governor, Sir George Hill, who gave a farewell entertainment to his late host and the officers of the *Galatea*. From St. Vincent she sailed for Port Royal, Jamaica, and thence to Tampico, on the coast of Mexico. Here Captain Napier had a very narrow escape from drowning, having imprudently made an attempt to land in a four-oared gig, although a tremendous surf was breaking over the bar. The gig was capsized, but, happily, its occupants succeeded in reaching the beach in safety. A subsequent attempt to communicate with the shore resulted in another boat being upset, and the loss of a very promising young officer, a midshipman of the name of Carrington.

After a trip to Sacrificios, the *Galatea* returned to Tampico, where she obtained a freight, and then, leaving the coast of Mexico, proceeded to Havannah. While there a French man-of-war entered the harbour, flying the Tricolour, which after the Revolution of July, 1830 had again become the flag of France; and Captain Napier jokingly remarked that this was the first occasion on which he had seen those colours so near without firing a shot. From Havannah the frigate started on her homeward voyage, arriving at Spithead on May 6, 1831, after an absence of nearly six months.

A great change was now about to take place in naval warfare by the adoption of steam power. This subject had for some time engrossed Napier's attention, and he was exceedingly anxious to be appointed to the first man-of-war steamer that should be constructed. Meanwhile, however, he continued to urge upon the Admiralty the advisability of equipping vessels of the line with paddles similar to those which had been so successfully employed on the *Galatea*, and immediately on his return home proceeded to London, for the purpose of personally submitting his views on the matter to the naval authorities.

At the Admiralty he was very courteously received by Sir Thomas Hardy, and given to understand that he would in all probability be appointed either to the first man-of-war steamer

or to a line-of-battle ship, if it were decided to equip one of these vessels with paddles. At the same time, he was informed that he must hold himself in readiness to proceed to the Azores, as the little Queen of Portugal's supporters were about to attack the Island of St. Michael, and the British merchants there had applied to the Government for protection.

From a letter to Mrs. Napier it would appear that he endeavoured to persuade the Admiralty to send out some other ship instead of the *Galatea*. But, if that were the case, his efforts were not attended with success, and on May 17 he sailed for the Azores, little foreseeing that he was there to form those associations which eventually led to his being appointed to the command of the Portuguese Constitutional fleet, and to his playing so important a part in placing Donna Maria upon her throne.

But before following Captain Napier on this mission, it may be as well to say a few words concerning the situation of affairs in Portugal.

CHAPTER VII

MISSION TO THE AZORES—VISIT TO SCOTLAND—THE PORTSMOUTH ELECTION

IN 1826 the death of John VI., King of Portugal, gave rise to a dispute about the succession to the throne. His elder son, Pedro I., Emperor of Brazil, a man of real ability, high character and enlightened views, succeeded him as Pedro IV., and justified his reputation by drawing up a charter containing the basis for a moderate party government of the English type, which he sent over to Portugal by the British diplomatist, Lord Stuart of Rothesay. Then, to please his Brazilian subjects, he abdicated the throne of Portugal, in favour of his daughter, Donna Maria da Gloria, a child of seven, with the proviso that, on attaining a suitable age, she should marry her uncle, Dom Miguel, who was to swear to observe the new constitution. The Charter of 1826 was received with gratitude by the moderate Parliamentary party, and, as there seemed every prospect of a tranquil succession, a body of 5,000 British troops which had been sent to maintain peace and order was withdrawn. But, unhappily, in the following year Dom Pedro destroyed the effect of his wise measures by appointing Dom Miguel to the regency of Portugal during the minority of the little Queen.

Dom Miguel, an ambitious and unscrupulous prince, who had been bitterly mortified that his brother should have transferred his rights to his little daughter instead of to himself, was extremely popular with the old nobility, the clergy and the Army, with all who disliked liberal ideas, and with the poor, who were under the influence of the mendicant orders. He was declared Regent in July, 1827, and in May of the following year he summoned a Cortes of the ancient type, such as had not met since the end of the seventeenth century, which, under the presidency of the Bishop of Viseu, offered him the throne. He accepted it,

and forthwith proceeded to annul the Constitution of 1826, and to imprison or issue decrees of banishment against all the leaders of the Parliamentary, or, as it is generally called, the Chartist, party, the Prime Minister, the Marquis of the Palmella, the Count of Villa Flor, Saldanha, Sampaio and others. The exiles naturally made for England, where the little Queen had recently arrived, on her way to be educated at the Court of Vienna,* and public opinion pronounced strongly in their favour. But the Duke of Wellington and his Tory Government, who appeared to have confused the Parliamentary and radical parties in Portugal, refused to countenance or assist them in any way, and the Duke even suggested that the easiest way out of the imbroglio would be to hasten on the marriage of Donna Maria to her perjured uncle. Amelia of Bavaria, Empress of Brazil, Dom Pedro's second wife, and the Marquis of Barbacena, the guardians of the little Queen, disgusted with the attitude of the British Government, removed her to France, where she was well received by Louis Philippe, who gave her the Château of Meudon as a residence ; but some of her supporters remained in England, where they succeeded in enlisting the sympathies of many influential persons.

Meanwhile, the reign of Dom Miguel had become a Reign of Terror ; arrests and executions were frequent ; numbers whom he believed to be hostile to him were deported, and in 1830 it was estimated that nearly forty thousand persons were in prison for political offences. Not content with indulging in the worst excesses of arbitrary power towards his own subjects, the usurper showed the most contemptuous disregard of international law, and at different times British, French and American warships entered the Tagus to demand reparation for the damage done to commerce or for the illegal arrest of foreigners. The result of such insane conduct was that the country was soon on the verge of hopeless ruin, and the Chartist and radical parties agreed to forget for the moment their own differences and unite in common opposition to the tyrant.

The Constitutionalists soon gained a most encouraging success. The island of Terceira, in the Azores, had never recognized Dom Miguel, and it was there that in 1829 Palmella, Villa Flor, José

* Donna Maria's mother was the Archduchess Maria Josepha, daughter of the Emperor Francis I. of Austria.

Antonio Gurreiro, and Quevedo Pizarro declared themselves a Council of Regency for Queen Maria da Gloria. In the summer of 1830, Dom Miguel dispatched an expedition against Terceira, but on August 11 the Miguelite squadron sustained a severe defeat in Praia Bay; and at this news all the Chartists who could contrive to effect their escape from Portugal, and the numerous exiles in England and France, hastened to the Azores, with the result that the little Queen's party grew stronger every day.

In 1831, Dom Pedro, having resigned his imperial crown to his infant son, left Brazil to place himself at the head of the movement on behalf of his daughter. He first went to England, where he was very cordially received by Lord Grey's Government, and succeeded in negotiating a considerable loan in the little Queen's name. He then proceeded to the Azores, taking with him as many men as he could raise, most of whom were Englishmen tired of peace, or adventurers of other nations, and, on his arrival, appointed the Count of Villa Flor commander-in-chief of Donna Maria's army, and Captain Sartorius, of the British Navy, admiral of the fleet.

Such was the situation of affairs when on May 17, 1831, Captain Napier sailed for the Azores, to watch over British interests during the struggle between the supporters of the Queen and those of Dom Miguel.

After a rather long passage, the *Galatea* arrived at St. Michael's, to find that no attack had yet been made on that island by the Constitutionalists, though one was expected at Fayal. After a stay of three days, she sailed for Terceira, and learned that the little Queen's expedition was at St. George's, waiting for favourable weather to descend upon Fayal. To Fayal Napier accordingly proceeded, where he found a great deal of unnecessary alarm among the English residents. There was a Miguelite corvette there and a garrison large enough to defend the place; but the captain and the governor apparently had no stomach for fighting, and had decided on abandoning the island. As the English residents were so afraid of a disturbance, Captain Napier ordered some of his officers to come on shore and take up their quarters in houses belonging to the English. He himself, with his step-son Charles Elers Napier and another midshipman named Engledew, going to the Consul's.

The embarkation began about mid-day on June 23, and

several shots were fired by the departing troops at the houses of the English, to whom, as their sympathies were known to be with the Queen's party, the Miguelite soldiers were none too well disposed. One ball whizzed past Captain Napier as he was standing at a window in the Consul's house, and shortly afterwards he learned that a young Englishman who had also been standing at a window had been wounded.

In high indignation, he immediately ordered the Corregidor, who had come to the Consul's for security, to write to the commanding officer of the militia, to say that if he did not show himself and preserve order, he should hold him responsible for any Englishman that might be shot. But, as that personage was nowhere to be found, and the Corregidor refused to go out alone, Captain Napier and the two midshipmen went with him, collected some of the militia and re-established tranquillity.

This done, he proceeded to the house where the wounded Englishman lay, and learning, on inquiry, that the fellow who had fired at him was on board an American brig that the Miguelites had hired to convey their troops, but which had not yet succeeded in leaving the harbour owing to the breeze failing, announced his intention of boarding her and demanding the surrender of the criminal. None of the *Galatea's* boats were at hand, but he succeeded in procuring a small one with a couple of oars, and requested the Corregidor to accompany him. That functionary's courage, however, was unequal to the task of facing a whole shipload of more or less desperate ruffians, so Captain Napier took with him an English merchant, who happened to be an old naval officer and was " less afraid of his bacon."

" On board the brig we went," he writes to his wife, " and I gave the Portuguese officer to understand that unless the men were given up, I should detain the whole of them. An immediate search was made, but without effect. It was still calm, and, as the Queen's troops were rowing over from Pico, I was afraid they might board the brig and put them all to death ; so I sent a boat to say they had surrendered, and I am glad to say they landed safe and in good order, and the town was illuminated and no lives lost. The town was afterwards illuminated for three nights. The Count Villa Flor, who commands [the Constitutionalists], and the consul's family (with whom I have been staying for the last three weeks) dined on board the *Galatea*, and I saluted them, manned yards, etc. The garrison is now established, and the rest of the troops returned to Terceira to prepare to attack St. Michael's, whither I am going. . . .

There will be no fighting, and when all is over, I shall return to England, or sooner, if I am relieved, which ought to have been the case long ago.

" They have been employing English vessels on both sides, with whom I have not interfered, which I hope is right; and, indeed, I expect the Admiralty will much approve of all I have done. Fortunately, I found here a work on the ' Law of Nations,' which has been a good guide."

During his visit to the Azores Captain Napier came into close intercourse with the Count of Villa Flor and other chiefs of the Constitutional party, and the lively sympathy which he evinced for their cause, and the high opinion which they formed of his professional abilities, were responsible for the offer which was made him in the following year to take command of the little Queen's fleet, in succession to Captain Sartorius.

The *Galatea* returned to Spithead towards the end of August, 1831, and her captain had the pleasure of learning that he had discharged the difficult and delicate duties with which he had been entrusted to the satisfaction of the Admiralty, although it was considered that he had been guilty of an error of judgment in having landed a body of marines.

" You have managed your matters well," wrote Admiral George Dundas, then one of the Board, " and to our satisfaction, in all but that of landing the marines; it is a delicate matter landing armed men in a foreign state, and ought not to be resorted to but on the most pressing emergency."

Shortly after the *Galatea's* return home, she was despatched to join the Experimental Channel Squadron, under Sir Edward Codrington, where she was afforded several opportunities of using her paddles. On one of these occasions, with a light wind abeam, she towed one of her consorts, the *Caledonia*, for a considerable distance at the rate of one knot, two fathoms an hour. Towards the middle of October, the *Galatea* was despatched from Spithead, in company with the *Stag*, to Jersey, to convey the 82nd Regiment to Portsmouth. On arriving off the island, as it happened to fall calm, Captain Napier had the paddles shipped and towed his consort into St. Aubyn's Bay.

On the 26th of that month, the *Galatea* joined a squadron under Admiral Warren, which had been assembled in the Downs, in consequence of the war between Holland and Belgium, though beyond the detention of a few Dutch merchantmen which happened to come their way, they did nothing.

Whilst in the Downs, the Duke of Wellington paid a visit to the fleet and invited Captain Napier to dinner.

"I dined with the Duke of Wellington the other day," he writes to Mrs. Napier, "and was delighted; he was most civil, and talked a great deal about the Navy. I was quite at home and asked him many questions, which he answered with the greatest freedom. He was very anxious to see our paddles, and would have come on board had he not been obliged to go to town; but, if we go to Woolwich, he is to come down to see them. He was astonished that nothing had been done about it; and I said I had never been able to get the last Board of Admiralty, or this one, to look at them. I opened out with him as I do everywhere, and I think he was much pleased; he shook hands twice when I came away."

On December 22, the *Galatea* and the *Stag* were despatched to the Little Nore, where they took on board a battalion of the 1st Royals, and sailed with them on Christmas Day for Leith. At the entrance to the Firth of Forth the vessels were becalmed, upon which the *Galatea* shipped her paddles, and the crew being assisted in working them by the soldiers on board, she reached Leith Roads on January 5, 1832, the *Stag* not coming in until the following day.

On the arrival of the *Galatea* at Leith, Captain Napier seized the opportunity to proceed to Edinburgh to visit some of his old friends.

"I first went to old Lady Duncan, who is eighty-four years of age," he writes to his wife. "The delight the old lady felt to see me was beyond everything, and the first thing she asked was whether you were with me, saying: 'I canna gang myself to see her, for I am sae auld, but I wull write to her, and ask her to come and see me.' From thence I went to the Miss H—'s, old friends of mine, and said: 'Hoo is aw wi' ye?' 'Oh! I dinna ken ye.' 'What!' said I, 'dinna ye ken Charlie Napier?' And then there were such exclamations. . . . It is impossible to tell you the kindness I have met with from everyone, and, if you had been here, I should have wanted nothing to add to my happiness."

He paid a visit to his old home, Merchistoun Hall, which he was shocked to find in a very dilapidated state:—

"All the stables and offices are gone to decay, and the roofs tumbling off; the house divided into two parts and going to ruin—in fact, it was like a deserted place. I went into my mother's room, was quite disgusted and came away. I then looked out for the old servants, and found one alive—the coachman, with a broken leg. However, I am glad to find that my selling it was not at all to be regretted; neither you nor

I would have liked to have lived there, as it is so dreadfully surrounded with towns. The garden is excellent, which is the only good thing about it."

One of his old schoolfellows, who was among the friends whom he visited on this occasion, related several years afterwards the following story :—

" I can relate an amusing and somewhat curious anecdote of Napier. I think it was in the year 1832 he arrived at Leith, in command of a frigate. He came to see me and take an early dinner. During the course of conversation on bygone events of former years in America, Spain and elsewhere, he remarked that he had been so long off real service, that he questioned if he could do the *trick* as well now as formerly ; but suddenly, seeming to imagine he had gone too far in doubting his own indomitable courage, he jumped up, exclaiming : ' By G——, you will see me die a Duke yet ! ' "

And the writer adds :—

" A very few years after, as everybody knows, he became a Portuguese noble by the capture of the Miguelite fleet ; and I think he is on the *high road* to merit any honour which Her Majesty has the power to bestow. By the force of his heroic example, how has he carried everything before him at sea or on shore ! Equally successful his plans—excellent his execution—rapid (that's the secret)—no hesitation—no shilly-shally with Charlie Napier. By his exploits in Syria, he has not only knocked on the head Mehemet Ali's soldiers, but he has knocked on the head Monsieur Thiers's policy, and by so doing contributed to give peace to Europe. I have known him now, man and boy, these forty years. I have marched with him, sailed with him, larked with him and fought with him. I now rejoice to see his name honoured as he is."

The *Galatea* sailed from Leith on January 15, and arrived in Portsmouth Harbour on the 23rd. Here she was paid off, and by the end of the month Captain Napier found himself once more on half-pay.

By no means sorry to exchange for a while the monotony of service at sea in time of peace for the comforts of home and the society of his wife and children, Napier returned to Purbrook Lodge, and began once more to cultivate his garden, and look after his poultry and pigs. Singularly enough, his cousin and namesake, Charles Napier the soldier, was also living a similarly retired life within a short walk of Purbrook Lodge, at a house called Broomfield, and his companionship was a source of great pleasure to Captain Napier.

After recovering from the wound which he had received at Busaco, Colonel Napier had rejoined Wellington's army, riding ninety miles with only one halt, though his wound was still bandaged, and was present at the Battle of Fuentes d'Onõro and the second siege of Badajos. Promoted to the lieutenant-colonelcy of the 102nd Regiment in June, 1811, he served with that corps in North America, but in 1813 exchanged back into his old regiment—the 50th—in the hope of seeing further service in the Peninsula. In this he was disappointed, the war with France being concluded before he reached England; but, on the escape of Napoleon from Elba, he went as a volunteer to Ghent, took part in the storming of Cambrai, and marched into Paris with the Allied armies. Appointed in 1822 Resident of Cephalonia, an office designed to protect the people from feudal oppression, he threw himself with such determination into the reform of abuses as eventually to bring him into collision with the High Commissioner, Sir Frederick Adam, who seized the opportunity of Napier's return to England on furlough, in 1830, to send home certain charges against him, and to declare that he would not allow him to return. The Government, thinking that there were, no doubt, faults on both sides, offered Napier the residency of Zante, a higher post than that of Cephalonia. But the offer was declined, on the ground that he considered that his character was not vindicated unless he returned to Cephalonia. And so he was now living in retirement, cultivating his garden like his kinsman, and when his work there was over for the day, sometimes occupying himself in repairing the parish road leading past his house; while in the evening he worked at a book on his government of Cephalonia.

" The two Charles Napiers possessed many traits of character in common," writes one who knew both intimately. " Both were endowed with the same daring ambition, the same energy and indomitable will; both despised the fear of responsibility, and in cases of necessity cast it contemptuously to the winds. Neither would quietly see his fellow-creatures trampled on, and neither would allow himself to be trampled on with impunity. Both were ' Liberals,' in the strongest acceptation of the term —the soldier, perhaps, even more so than the sailor—both were idolized by the soldiers and sailors under their respective commands, who found in each a staunch and able advocate of their

rights; both were authors and wrote much to the point, particularly on professional subjects."*

Captain Napier had not as yet published any work, but he had already begun to contribute to the pages of the *United Service Magazine*, in which several articles by him, some describing incidents in his own career, such as his adventures in the Mediterranean when in command of the *Thames*, and his account of the expedition up the Potomac; others exposing abuses and suggesting reforms in the administration of the Navy, appeared in this and the following year. Written in a bright and lively style, they attracted considerable attention.

Captain Napier had for some time cherished Parliamentary ambitions, as he was aware that a seat in the House of Commons would be the surest means of promoting those reforms in his profession which he was so anxious to see introduced. Accordingly, at the General Election which followed the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832, he came forward as an Independent Liberal candidate for Portsmouth, in opposition to the retiring members for that constituency, John Bonham-Carter and Francis Thornhill Baring. It was certainly a plucky thing to do, for Bonham-Carter had represented the borough for twenty years, and his family interest there was very great; while his colleague, who had married a niece of the Prime Minister and was now a Junior Lord of the Treasury, had held the seat since 1826; and in the frank and sailor-like address which he issued on his adoption as a candidate, Captain Napier said that he was taking a "sporting chance":—

"I have been told I am a bold man to canvass Portsmouth; so much the better. I love enterprise, and the inhabitants of Portsmouth will not like me the worse for that; the more danger, the more glory. If I succeed, I shall gain honour—if I fail, no disgrace."

He then proceeds to expound his political views:—

"Now, gentlemen, for my profession of faith, without further palaver: My principles have been Liberal all my life; I have always been favourable to Reform and to a correction of abuses; and as the present Administration have given Reform, and are correcting abuses, I am favourable to them. Gentlemen, I wish to see all sinecures and useless situations abolished, whether in the Army, the Navy, or any other branch; I wish

* General Elers Napier.

to preserve useful institutions, to keep up as large a Navy as the finances of the country will allow, and to keep that Navy efficient and always ready for work."

Then, after criticizing the indifference shown by the retiring members to local interests, and predicting that, if again returned, the electors "would probably not see their faces until the next election," he declares that he has come forward as a perfectly independent candidate, and concludes :—

"It is unpleasant to speak of oneself; perhaps at present it is allowable.* My professional character, I believe, will bear investigation. I have served faithfully for thirty-two years and have been three times wounded in the service; and, in the event of war, will always hear the drum when it beats to quarters; and, instead of being '*an enemy in your camp*,' as I have been designated, you will find me in the camp of an enemy opposed to your interests."

In the course of his canvass of the electorate an amusing incident occurred.

We have already mentioned that he was always very eccentric in matters of dress. In early days this eccentricity seems to have manifested itself chiefly in the colour and fit of his habiliments or in their combination—spurred hunting-boots worn with full naval uniform, and so forth. But, as he grew older, he not only chose remarkable garments, but sometimes continued

* It must be frankly admitted that the gallant captain, who was never troubled by a false modesty, appears to have availed himself to the full of the liberty permitted a Parliamentary candidate, and to have spoken a good deal of himself in the course of the election. Here are some extracts from one of his speeches :—

"In the course of my canvass I have been asked who I am. I'll tell you. I am Captain Charles Napier, who, twenty-five years ago, commanded the *Recruit* brig in the West Indies, and who had the honour of being twenty-four hours under the guns of three French line-of-battle ships flying from a British squadron, the nearest of which, with the exception of the *Hawke* brig, was from five to six miles astern the greater part of the time. I kept flying double-shotted broadsides into them. One of the ships (the *d'Hautpoult*) only was captured by the *Pompey* and *Castor*; the other two escaped by superior sailing. Sir Alexander Cochrane, my commander-in-chief, promoted me on the spot into her. . . . At the Battle of Busaco I had the honour of carrying off the field my gallant friend and relative Captain Napier, now near me, who was shot through the face. . . . On my return to England, I was appointed to the *Thames*, in the Mediterranean, and, if I could bring the inhabitants of the Neapolitan coast into this room, they would tell you that from Naples to the Faro Point there was not a spot where I did not leave my mark and brought off with me upwards of a hundred sail of gun-boats and merchant vessels. . . . From the Mediterranean I was ordered to America; and if my gallant friend Sir James Gordon were here, he would have told you how I did my duty in that long and arduous service up the Potomac; he would have told you that in a tremendous squall the *Eurydus* lost her bowsprit and all her topmasts, and that in twelve hours she was again ready for work."

to wear them until they were positively threadbare. Thus, one day during the Portsmouth contest, he called at the house of a worthy tradesman, to solicit his " vote and interest," attired in a coat and hat that were fit only for the dustbin, and, learning that he was not at home, begged his wife to employ her good offices to secure him the absent elector's support. But in vain did he endeavour to convince her of his identity. The good lady frankly expressed her incredulity that " so shabbily dressed a fellow " could be really a distinguished officer of the Royal Navy and a candidate for Parliament ; for in 1833, be it remembered, candidates for Parliament were infinitely more important personages than in these days of salaried legislators, and he had neither card nor proof of any kind to show. At last, a bright idea struck him, and, unbuttoning his waistcoat, he triumphantly pointed to his shirt, on the front of which Charles Napier was written at full length. This removed the lady's doubts, and she promised to persuade her husband to " plump " for him.

Captain Napier, who was strenuously supported in his candidature by his cousin Charles, was received very favourably at all the public meetings which he addressed, where resolutions were usually passed in his favour. But, though he was clearly the popular candidate of the day, comparatively few of those who applauded his speeches and held up their hands in his favour possessed votes, and at the close of the election he found himself at the bottom of the poll, the figures being :—

Bonham-Carter	825
Baring	706
Napier	260

The result was a great disappointment to the populace, and when the successful candidates attempted to return thanks, they met with a very hostile reception, and could scarcely make themselves heard. Finally, a large body of sailors approached the hustings, one of whom nudged Captain Napier, and, pointing to the stalwart fellows with him, exclaimed : " Captain, shall us board 'em and cut short their d——d yarn ? " Captain Napier declined this proposal, but, nevertheless, had no little difficulty in preventing it from being carried into effect, and, but for his exertions, Mr. Baring, against whom the mob were particularly exasperated, might have been very roughly handled.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PORTUGUESE ADVENTURE

SINCE his return from the Azores, Napier had continued to take a keen interest in the success of the Portuguese Constitutionalist cause, and to keep in touch with the leaders of the Queen's party, whose acquaintance he had made during the summer of 1831. In the autumn of that year, the Constitutionalists, after having succeeded in planting the standard of Donna Maria da Gloria on every one of the Western Islands, had dispatched an expedition against Oporto and had captured it. But the town was soon closely besieged by the Miguelite army, and Napier foresaw that the war might drag on indefinitely, or until the funds of the Constitutionalists were exhausted, unless they could make a successful attempt upon Lisbon. He made representations to this effect to the Council of Regency, who recognized the force of his advice, and when, in September, 1832, the Marquis of Palmella came to England to urge the British Government to intervene on behalf of the young Queen of Portugal, he had several interviews with Napier on the matter, and suggested that he should take command of the Constitutional Fleet, a position at this time held by Sartorius. Napier, however, professed himself unable to entertain the proposal, until he had communicated with and obtained Sartorius's concurrence, as he would never agree to supersede one of his oldest friends, except with the latter's consent.

This obstacle to his accepting the proposal that had been made him was soon overcome, for Sartorius had found his position a most unenviable one. He had gained, it is true, some marked successes over the Miguelite forces; but the difficulties with which he had to contend were very great. He was met at every turn by factious opposition from the Constitutional leaders; the supplies and pay which had been promised were

not forthcoming, and his men were, in consequence, mutinous, and deserted at the earliest opportunity. To keep them together he had been obliged to advance considerable sums from his own purse, and, since repayment was delayed, had threatened to carry off the fleet to England and hold it in pledge. Dom Pedro thereupon sent two officers on board the flagship, one with authority to arrest Sartorius and bring him on shore, the other to take command of the squadron. Sartorius, being warned, made prisoners of both as soon as they stepped on board—a summary proceeding which was warmly approved of by his men and went far to conciliate them. But the situation had now become an impossible one, and, on receiving Napier's letter, informing him of the offer he had received, which, however, he felt that he could not accept without knowing from Sartorius whether he wished to retire, he hastened to reply that no better choice could have been made, and that he would gladly give up his command to him. At the same time, he cautioned him to bring out all his superior officers. The command was formally offered to Napier in a letter from the Chevalier de Lima, the representative of the Queen of Portugal in England, but, warned by his predecessor's sad experiences, with which Sartorius had not failed to acquaint him, he declined to accept it, until satisfactory financial arrangements had been made, both for himself and the officers he might take with him.

"It is settled to-day," he writes to his wife, under date February 5, 1833, "that I shall accept the command of the fleet on receiving six months' pay in advance, my expenses to be paid out to Oporto, and my life to be insured for £10,000 for six months; the officers I take are also to have six months' pay in advance, and Sartorius is to be acquainted with this proposed arrangement, as I find they have not communicated their intentions to him; this will require about a fortnight, and I only wait to see one of Sartorius's officers, to know exactly the state of the fleet, before I send my letter in reply to the Minister; so that I shall not leave this till to-morrow evening or the next morning. I shall then speak to Charles* about taking him. I believe Peak and his brother will go—the one as captain of the fleet, the other in command of a ship."

And three days later he writes:—

"I was prevented from leaving town yesterday by the arrival of an officer from Oporto, sent for the express purpose of treating with me to take the command of an expedition of 7,000 men and twelve steam-

* His younger step-son, Charles Elers Napier.

boats for an attack on Lisbon. A sudden dash is to be made, headed by me. I long to tell you all the plan I sent some time ago to the Marquis, and they were delighted with it. I have told them I must have despotic power, or I will do nothing."

At this juncture a vexatious delay occurred, due to the fact that the Portuguese Ministry in London had not sufficient funds to proceed with the expedition, and it seemed as though it would have to be abandoned. Finally, however, some London capitalists, solely, it would appear, on the strength of Captain Napier's reputation, agreed to advance a considerable sum and overcame the difficulty. On April 6 Captain Napier writes :—

" I have consented to go with three steamboats and 1,000 men to land on the Algarves and make an effort in their favour, as the only chance they now have, unless Sartorius arranges something with them. It is a trifling thing, but without my name they could not raise £12,000 or pence, and that is given by two or three gentlemen, because I am going ; £6,000 was obtained yesterday, and they hope to get the rest to-day. I shall call off Oporto, and if they have settled with Sartorius and paid the men, and the ships are in a good state, I shall take the command ; if not, I return in the steamboats."

On April 30 he wrote again to his wife, saying that he proposed to sail for Oporto the following week, and that " if nothing unexpected happened, in one month he hoped to be either in Lisbon or in Heaven," and signing his letter, " Don Carlos de Ponza."

This *nom de guerre*, which recalls his brilliant little achievement on the Neapolitan coast in 1813, described in an earlier chapter, he had adopted in the hope of avoiding the penalties of the Foreign Enlistment Act, and his example was followed by the four British officers whom he had chosen to accompany him to Portugal : Captain James Wilkinson, an old shipmate, who had served under him in the *Thames* and the *Euryalus*, and was then living on half-pay at Cowes ; Lieutenant Peak ; Mr. Pearn, formerly Master of the *Galatea*, and his younger step-son, Charles Elers Napier, who had recently been promoted to the rank of lieutenant in the Navy. The names they assumed for the occasion were Reeves, Henry, Philipps and Charley. Captain Wilkinson was appointed Commodore in the Constitutional Fleet ; Charles Elers Napier was to be his step-father's flag-lieutenant ; Lieutenant Peak had been promised the

command of a ship, and Mr. Pearn was to be Master of the Fleet, if there were no vacant command.

So far from sailing the following week, it was not until the end of May that Captain Napier—or, rather, Don Carlos de Ponza—was able to leave England. On May 17 he writes to Mrs. Napier, from Freemason's Court, City :—

"I have waited here all day to finish my insurance, and am happy to tell you that, in the event of my death, all is arranged, and you will have £10,000. The policy of insurance will be sent you in a few days, properly settled by Mr. Hallett,* who happened to be one of the treasurers. I shall leave you with a memo how I wish it to be divided when you die, and I shall trust entirely to your doing what I wish.

"We have had delay about a steamboat, and now start with six."

About the middle of May, Captain Napier had an attack of neuralgia, of so severe a character that it would probably have incapacitated a man of less iron will.

"I really thought I should have knocked up altogether," he says in a letter dated the 19th, "for I have suffered a great deal." And he adds : "In the midst of all my enterprises you may rely upon it that my thoughts will often be turned to home ; and I look forward to return with great glory and honour, and a good deal of advantage."

Everything being at last satisfactorily settled, he returned home to bid farewell to his family ; and on May 22, accompanied by Lieutenant Elers Napier, he went on board the steamer *City of Waterford*, which was waiting for him at Spithead. There had been a mutiny the night before among the seamen who had been engaged to serve in the expedition, in consequence of their having been robbed by the crimps, but it had been quelled by the firmness and decision of "Commodore" Wilkinson, and by the time the "Admiral" stepped on to the quarter-deck order had been restored.

From Spithead the *City of Waterford* proceeded to Falmouth, where the rest of the expedition was waiting, and from which Captain Napier writes, under date May 27 :—

"When I got on board the steamboat, I soon put everything to rights with the men ; they had all been cheated in a shameful manner—they are to be redressed this evening before we start. They are, nevertheless, a set of very troublesome fellows, and I expect a great deal of torment ;

* Of the firm of Hallett and Maude, his Naval Agents.

however, I shall endeavour to get through with it. We had a very pleasant passage here, and I have arranged two messes in the steamboat —one for the Marquis (of Palmella), myself, the captain, and a few others, amounting to ten; the other, lieutenants and midshipmen, and I have assumed at once the 'Admiral.' . . . We sail this evening, which I am glad of, as we can manage the men very well at sea, but in harbour they are the devil."

This would appear to have been a not inapt description of them, for while Captain Napier was on shore, another mutiny broke out on the *City of Waterford*, and several of the seamen were drowned in an attempt to escape, through the upsetting of a boat. Commodore Wilkinson and the other officers eventually succeeded in restoring order, and the Admiral, returning in all haste on board, harangued the mutineers from the poop, promising that their grievances should be inquired into and redressed, and, at the same time, threatening them with condign punishment should they again offend. This speech appeared to have had a good effect, but, as he considered it advisable to get his troublesome followers beyond the reach of temptation as quickly as possible, he gave orders to put to sea at once, though he was still short by more than half the number of seamen who were required to complete the squadron which he was about to join.

The reinforcements which Don Carlos de Ponza was taking out to the Constitutional cause consisted of five steamers, containing about 160 officers and seamen, together with two battalions—one English, the other Belgian—to strengthen the garrison of Oporto. After a pleasant passage, the Admiral and his colleagues arrived at Vigo, where they found awaiting them another steamer from Rochefort, which was to have brought a contingent of 400 Poles. To their astonishment and disgust, however, this part of the armament had completely failed, and she brought with her only twelve men.

Four of the steamers remained at Vigo to take on board coal and water; but the *City of Waterford* pushed on and anchored that same evening, after dark, in Oporto roads. A heavy artillery duel was in progress, and those on board the steamer were at first under the impression that an assault was being made on the town. But they subsequently learned that this prodigal expenditure of ammunition was an almost nightly practice.

Sartorius was lying off Oporto, with his flag on board the

Rainha de Portugal, with the *Dom Pedro*, the *Donna Maria*, the brig *Villa Flor*, and a numerous convoy of merchant vessels, awaiting a favourable opportunity to land provisions and stores for the use of the garrison and inhabitants. The landing, it appeared, had been effected during the last two months with tolerable safety, though frequently interrupted by the surf, and the town, except for a scarcity of livestock, which was not easily obtained, was now well provisioned.

Accompanied by the Marquis of Palmella and the financier, Señor Mendizabal, Captain Napier at once proceeded on board the flagship, where he was very cordially received by the officer whom he had come out to supersede. Sartorius expressed himself quite disgusted with the Queen's service and indignant at the conduct of the Ministers towards him. "By all I could collect from him," writes Captain Napier, "the prospect before me was by no means brilliant. The Miguelite fleet was fitting out in great force, and shortly expected to sail. Our force was very inferior in numbers and material, and no dependence was to be placed on the men who had the direction of the war. They were on bad terms with the marshal,*and were pretty generally despised by the Portuguese officers. The civil war in Portugal was unlike other wars. Dom Pedro's and Dom Miguel's Ministers vied with each other in intrigues and follies; but, fortunately for the cause of the Queen, Dom Pedro was more active than his brother; his Ministers could do less harm, and the cause of liberty triumphed."†

After remaining some hours with Sartorius, the despatch-boat came off; and, as the beach was good, no time was lost in getting on shore. This was a task attended with considerable danger. The entrance of the Douro was here little more than a pistol-shot across; the north side was held by the Queen's troops, the opposite by the Miguelites, and the little bay to the north of the Castle of Foz, where boats were accustomed to land when the surf permitted, was commanded by the enemy's musketry. However, they were favoured by the darkness, and though a good many shots were fired at them, none took effect, and they reached the shore in safety.

* Marshal Solignac, see p. 90 *infra*.

† "An Account of the War in Portugal between Don Pedro and Don Miguel," by Admiral Charles Napier. London, 1836.

They were received with great cordiality by General Saldanha,* who commanded at the Foz, and while mules to take them into the town were being got ready, he gave them some insight into the military situation.

"After partaking of the hospitality of Saldanha," continues Captain Napier, "we mounted our mules and proceeded into the town. The weather was fine, the country beautiful, and the scenery enlivening to a degree. On the left, were the enemy's batteries, with their flags flying, sufficiently close to observe their sentinels; on the right, at a little distance, the river, with its high rising banks, well wooded, and the opposite heights crowned by the Miguelite batteries, occasionally sending their shot and shell from either side into the Queen's lines, distinguished by the blue and white Constitutional flag. Nearly twenty years had passed since I had seen an enemy; the sight of flags, the sound of drums and bugles, soon awoke me to a recollection of the scenes of early life, and conveyed a sensation which will be well understood by those accustomed to the bustle of war and camp. The road was tolerably well covered, being dangerous only in a few places, and we passed without molestation.

"At six we entered the besieged and heroic city of Oporto, and proceeded to the Duke of Terceira's† quarters, where we were greeted with the greatest joy by the duke and his staff—Palmella as a sincere friend and colleague and myself as an old acquaintance in the Western Islands. A few minutes sufficed to explain how we came and what brought us, and the whole party were rejoiced at our arrival. They now looked forward to active measures and to the termination of the intrigues that had been so long going on at Oporto."

The house in which the Duke of Terceira was lodged had been frequently struck by shells; nevertheless, all the inmates seemed quite at their ease, and the chance of suddenly finding the place come tumbling about their ears did not interfere with their enjoyment of a most excellent breakfast. After making them-

* João Carlos de Saldanha de Oliveira e Daun. He had served with great distinction under Beresford in the Peninsular War, and afterwards in Brazil, and in the previous March had twice defeated the Miguelites. On his mother's side he was a grandson of the celebrated Portuguese statesman Pombal.

† The Count Villa Flor had recently been created Duke of Terceira.

selves acquainted with the situation of affairs, Captain Napier and his companions waited upon the Marquis de Loulé, the Emperor's brother-in-law and Minister of Marine, from whom they learned, somewhat to their surprise, that all was not quite as it should be at headquarters; indeed, the marquis even cautioned Captain Napier to say nothing about the projected expedition until after he had been admitted to an audience by Dom Pedro.

Captain Napier showed him the Chevalier de Lima's letter, containing the formal offer of the command of the Portuguese Constitutional Fleet, and gave him to understand that he should refuse to accept it unless an expedition were immediately decided upon.

Palmella then proposed that they should proceed at once to the palace, to which Napier objected, "not being," he writes, "exactly in a costume to appear before royalty, having suffered much from a nervous affection of the face, and my head being wrapped up in flannel, like a respectable old lady." However, his objections were overcome, and the Marquis de Loulé conducted them to the palace.

Palmella was the first to be ushered into the imperial presence, whence he soon returned and announced that he had been very coldly received.

"I came next," says Captain Napier, "and was received at the door of the apartment by the Emperor, who stood with his hands behind him, looking very angry, and speaking as roughly as he looked. Not being accustomed to such company, I began to consider whether this was an uncivil or only an imperial manner of receiving a person who had come out to render him a service. My meditations were soon disturbed by His Majesty, in rather a brusque manner, asking me if I wished an expedition immediately; to which I replied that I had come out for the express purpose. He then referred me to Marshal Solignac, and dismissed me rather abruptly."*

This Marshal Solignac was a French officer, who had gained a considerable reputation in Spain under Masséna, and at the beginning of 1833 had taken command of the Constitutionalist Army, being named Marshal and Major-General. He was an able soldier, and had done what he could to bring the troops under his command into a proper state of organization and

* "War in Portugal."

discipline ; but he was ambitious and exceedingly jealous of his authority.

In high dudgeon, Napier went, with one of the Emperor's aides-de-camp, to visit the marshal, his interview with whom hardly tended to restore his good-humour. The Frenchman, though he received him courteously enough, seemed by no means well disposed towards the projected expedition, and when his visitor suggested that 6,000 men would be required, declared that such a force was utterly out of the question, as he had not more than that number altogether. He proposed, however, that he should accompany him next morning to the Emperor and discuss what could be done in the matter. But Napier bluntly declined another interview with His Majesty, unless he were specially sent for. He added that he had been much hurt at the manner in which he had been received, and that, if something were not immediately decided upon, he should return to England forthwith. And this resolution he proceeded to communicate to all his Portuguese friends.

In the course of the day it transpired that certain intriguing persons had persuaded Dom Pedro that the expedition had been brought out to displace him, and that, for this reason, the preparations had been made in secret and without communicating with his Government. His Majesty, having apparently received assurance that nothing of the kind was intended, sent a request to Captain Napier to wait upon him the following morning, in company with the Marshal Solignac, and this time received him most graciously, being obviously anxious to atone for his ill-humour of the previous day.

Encouraged by his Majesty's changed disposition, Napier told him plainly the view that he held of the situation, namely, that the Emperor had no choice but to lay down his arms or take some decisive step. The shortest way, he said, was to force the Tagus, if they could get a favourable breeze at night, land in Black Horse Square, or close to Lisbon, make a rapid march on the capital, or send a force to the south, the three different plans being subject to the troops which the Emperor could spare. He recommended him at once to begin the embarkation of troops, which was difficult and required time, and pressed upon him the necessity of despatch, as the Miguelite fleet was fitting out in great force, and would, if

ready, check all their operations. The interview, however, ended without any decision being arrived at, the Emperor and the Marshal merely promising to consider the matter.

Several days passed in intrigues and consultations, with which we do not propose to trouble the reader. Captain Napier accuses Solignac of endeavouring to prevent any expedition being undertaken, from fear of losing what he called "*la gloire*," if the operations were taken out of his hands, and this is not improbable.

"To-day," he writes to Mrs. Napier, "there was a grand council of war, when all the principal officers agreed with me, and the Emperor has promised to decide with me to-morrow; but the fool Solignac is doing all he can to prevent anything going on. If the Emperor does not come to a final determination to-morrow, it is more than probable his generals will send him home; they are all on my side and will do just what I say. The squadron is here, but I have not been on board since. My face has been very bad, and it is now so inflamed that I cannot articulate one word, and am suffering much pain, which is, however subsiding. The marquis and I are in a large house, under range of the batteries, which throw shot and shell into the town in all parts. Dining with Villa Flor the other day, a shell burst within six feet of the window where we were sitting, but did no harm. The town is dreadfully cut up, but people think nothing of it. We have a rising ground between us and the batteries and get on very well. It is a beautiful country, and a pity it should be so destroyed. The business cannot last two months more, for want of funds, and nothing but my determination to go home, if nothing is done, has any effect on them. The fleet is in tolerable order, and I shall get on well enough when once on board."

At the council of war to which Napier refers in the foregoing letter, and at which he had been obliged to give his opinion in writing, as he was unable to speak, he had again pointed out to the Emperor that nothing but an immediate and decisive step could save their cause, and had advised him to contract his lines, give up the Foz and the line of communication, and defend Oporto alone—which was provisioned for three months—embark all the men he could spare and make a dash on Lisbon. If the enterprise were successful, Dom Miguel's game would be up, and the siege of Oporto would be raised; if it failed, the garrison of Oporto must share the fate of the Lisbon division. Saldanha supported him, as did the majority of those present, but Solignac was opposed to his plan, declaring that it would

be fatal to their cause to send a small force to a distant part of the kingdom.

Next morning, when Napier met the Emperor and the marshal, to learn His Majesty's decision, Dom Pedro informed him that he had decided to embark 5,000 men, make a dash on Lisbon and play double or quits. He also announced his intention of accompanying the expedition in person, while the marshal would take command of the troops. In the course of the day, however, all was changed, and the Emperor announced that he and Solignac would remain at Oporto, and that a smaller force should be sent to land wherever it was thought most advisable.

Captain Napier—or, rather, Don Carlos de Ponza—now received his commission, under the seal of the Emperor, as Vice-Admiral, Major-General of the Portuguese Navy and Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet, with authority to appoint his officers. That evening, after dark, he embarked at the Foz, in order to reach the squadron and assume his command.

"I had not proceeded many yards," he writes, "when the Miguelite batteries, which we were obliged to pass within pistol-shot, opened their fire of round, grape and musketry, throwing fire-balls at the same time to point out more clearly the position of the boats. The castle of the Foz and the adjacent batteries returned the salute, and between the two fires, which to a person in safety would have been very beautiful, but to one in danger very unpleasant, I managed to get safe through the surf, with a boat's crew half of whom did not know how to pull their oars, and could not have been worse had they been selected by Dom Miguel himself. I was followed by about five hundred men of the first division, and, though they were peppered most confoundedly, not a man was hurt."

Early on the morning of the 11th, he got safely on board the *Rainha de Portugal*, when Sartorius formally surrendered to him the command of the squadron. In a letter to Admiral George Dundas, Napier wrote :—

"Sartorius is a fine, honourable fellow, and has behaved nobly. He has been treated infamously, and I think it was impossible for a man to do more than he did. Perhaps he has not sufficiently kept up discipline—but probably he could not help this; and I daresay I shall not find it an easy task, though I begin under the most favourable circum-

stances, taking on board with me money to pay the squadron, and decorations to bestow on those who have deserved them. I hope you will reinstate him immediately."

The kindly sentiments which prompted this generous tribute were mutual, and no ill-feeling seems even for a moment to have interrupted the long friendship of these two distinguished seamen.

On hoisting his flag, the following general order was issued by the new Admiral of the Constitutionalist Fleet :—

"H.M.F.M.S. *Rainha de Portugal*,
"Oporto Roads, June 11, 1833.

"On taking command of the squadron of Her Most Faithful Majesty, I feel proud in associating myself with so many gallant officers and men who have already so nobly distinguished themselves in the cause of freedom and the Queen.

"The squadron must have seen that a large force of steamboats are now here to co-operate with them. Should the enemy put to sea, you will know what to do with them. Should they remain in port, attacks will be made on various parts of the coast, and a general rising of the people against usurpation and tyranny is anticipated. My lads! we have battles to fight and great exertions to make. Preserve discipline and look up to your officers, and we shall succeed. The eyes of every free man in Europe are on you. Your countrymen—ay! and countrywomen also—are longing to welcome you home; and when the battle is won, and you return to your native homes, you will be hailed as men who rescued suffering Portugal from tyranny and oppression.

"CARLOS DE PONZA,
"Vice-Admiral and Major-General
of H.M.F. Majesty's Navy.

"To the respective Captains and Officers of H.M.F. Majesty's Fleet."

Having issued this order, Admiral Napier ordered the steamboats in shore to receive the troops, and sent boats to assist in towing them off. To his astonishment, however, they returned, bringing with them one cask of water and five soldiers! In high indignation, he telegraphed: "That is not the manner to gain the cause of the Queen;" and, suspecting that there were dissensions between the Government and Solignac, he telegraphed again: "Are soldiers coming off or not? I shall act accordingly." He also wrote to say that if troops were not immediately embarked, he should haul down his flag and return to England forthwith. He was convinced, from what he had seen of the vacillations and intrigues of the Emperor and his advisers, that nothing but taking a high tone would put an end to

them, and he was right. For in the evening he received an intimation by telegraph to send boats on shore for troops, and a despatch by the guard-boat, informing him that another council had been held, at which it was decided that 5,000 men could not be spared, but that 2,500, under the Duke of Terceira, were to be embarked for an expedition to the south, while Palmella was to accompany the expedition as governor of the provinces which might declare for the Queen. He also learned that Solignac, who disapproved of the expedition, had resigned,* and that the Emperor had taken command of the army and appointed General Saldanha chief of his staff.

Before Napier's flag had been up many hours he found that, as he expresses it, "he was not reposing on a bed of roses." "The ships," he continues, "were badly furnished in every species of stores, had hardly a boat that could swim, and could not average two anchors and cables for each ship. The men were almost naked, and there was no means of clothing them. In short, it was impossible to see a more inefficient squadron, and how Admiral Sartorius got through the winter and kept them together is difficult to understand."†

Nor was this all. Promises had been made to the oldest seamen that they should be allowed to return to England with Sartorius, and no persuasions would induce them to remain, which is hardly surprising after the manner in which they had been treated. The squadron was thus deprived of one hundred of the best men, and those whom Napier had brought from England barely sufficed to complete the crews of the frigates. The *Villa Flor* was chiefly manned by Portuguese, the *Portuense* entirely so; and the disorder on board the latter vessel was such that she was paid off, and the officers and men landed. Captain Blackstone, who had commanded the *Rainha*, was appointed to her, and a mixed crew of one hundred men got together; Captain Wilkinson took command of the flag-ship,

* "It is due to the marshal to observe that, though he disapproved entirely of sending so small a force to the south, he offered either to accompany an expedition of five thousand men to Lisbon, or, if the Emperor went, to remain and defend Oporto. This measure, however, did not square with the timidity of the Emperor's advisers. They neither cared to go with the Emperor on so bold an enterprise, nor liked to remain with the marshal with so small a force, and, consequently, they succeeded in persuading His Majesty to choose this smaller enterprise."—"War in Portugal."

† "War in Portugal."

with the rank of Commodore; Charles Elers Napier was appointed principal Adjutant, and Pearn Master of the Fleet each with the rank of commander; Lieutenant Peak was appointed to the command of the *Donna Maria.* Captain Goble remained in command of the *Dom Pedro,* and Captain Ruxton of the *Villa Flor*; Captain MacDonough took charge of the steamboats and Captain Pryce of the naval transport.

The weight of metal of the squadron was as follows: The *Dom Pedro* mounted 50 short eighteen-pounders and 32 carronades; the *Rainha,* 46 eighteen-pounders, long and short; the *Donna Maria,* 42 eighteen-pounders and thirty-two pound carronades; the *Villa Flor,* 18 eighteen-pounders; and the *Portuense,* 20 thirty-two pound carronades; whilst the aggregate crews did not exceed one thousand men and officers.

"With this force, and in this state," writes Napier in his history of the war, "we had to conduct an expedition to rescue Portugal from the tyranny of Dom Miguel and place Donna Maria on the throne, against one hundred thousand men, and against the will of the nation, as has been repeatedly asserted and believed by the Tory party in this country; and this was to be done in face of a squadron of two line-of-battle ships, one fifty-gunned ship, a fifty-gunned frigate, three corvettes and four or five brigs, ready for sea in the Tagus; and the troops to go on this expedition were to be embarked at night and pass over a dangerous bar within pistol-shot of the enemy's batteries, who had full warning of our intention and had made every preparation to destroy them."

On the evening of June 15, the Dukes of Terceira and Palmella came on board the *Rainha,* with a numerous and brilliant staff, and Admiral Napier was hard put to find suitable accommodation for so many distinguished persons. However, he shared his own cabin with the two dukes, while the fore-cabin was provided with a sail for the staff.

"This," he writes, "was rough accommodation for counts and marquesses, but the best we had; and I never saw in any service a finer set of young men or officers more ready to put up with every inconvenience. I must not omit to mention that a company of students, serving as volunteers, had no other accommodation than a sail under the half-deck, and ship's provisions, and yet I never heard a grumble from them; they were all devoted to the cause they served, and were ready to put up with any hardships to advance it.

Together with Terceira and Palmella came the remainder of the troops, and by the 18th all were on board

CHAPTER IX

THE VICTORY OFF CAPE ST. VINCENT

OWING to delays in the embarkation of the troops and stores, and the difficulty experienced in obtaining a sufficient supply of water, it was not until June 20 that the squadron was able to sail, when, favoured by a fine breeze, it stood to the southward, " our hearts," wrote its commander, " leaping with joy at the fine prospect before us."

After reconnoitring Figueras and showing himself off Peniché, Admiral Napier shaped his course a few leagues outside of the Rock of Lisbon, abreast of which he lay till sunset, with the view of distracting as much as possible the attention of Dom Miguel's Ministers, who had no idea where the blow was to be struck. Then he made sail for the south, and on the night of the 23rd rounded Cape St. Vincent, which was well lighted by the friars in the convent, who had on certain nights a brilliant fire burning on the promontory.

In a letter to his wife dated that day Napier complains that there " had been neither order nor discipline aboard the squadron, and that, in fact, everything was in confusion."

" I go on very well with the officers," he continues, " I carry on the Admiral tolerably well. Wilkinson does all I wish, but I think is occasionally pettish, which is bad ; but he is getting the ship into order fast. I do all I can not to interfere, and I succeed very well. Charley is my aide-de-camp, and assists me in the management of the squadron ; he is much liked here. We sit down twenty to dinner every day. Mendizabal is the purveyor, and Charley caterer. . . . God bless you ! How happy shall I be when I once more get to Purbrook, particularly if I do good service to this cause ! I really like the people. All on board are the finest young men I ever saw."

On the 24th, the squadron passed Lagos, Faro and Tavira, and at five o'clock in the afternoon cast anchor in the Bay of

Cacellas, a few miles west of the mouth of the Guadiana. It had been decided on the previous day that the expedition should make their descent there, push the steam-boats up the river, and make a rapid march on Beja. No opposition was encountered, except from a one-gun battery, which was quickly silenced, and, notwithstanding the cautions of the captains of the steamboats, who were very unwilling to approach the land, by midnight the troops had all been landed, together with their stores and ammunition.

At daybreak the Duke of Terceira began his march towards Tavira, which was occupied at noon, after a slight skirmish with the enemy, the squadron anchoring off the town at the same time. Olhao was occupied the following day, and on the 28th the troops entered Faro, the capital of the Algarves, where the Duke of Palmella landed and established a provisional government, and the principal inhabitants signed their adhesion to the Queen.

At Faro they remained for a couple of days to rest and organize the troops, after which the Duke of Terceira resumed his triumphant march, the squadron moving along the coast towards Lagos. Its commander was in the highest spirits.

"After I have finished the business at Lagos," he writes to Mrs. Napier, "I go off to Lisbon, and, if the people will rise, I shall go right in and finish the business. My friend Pitta is to send you a hogshead of Madeira, the moment he arrives in England, which will be by this conveyance; it comes from his own estate. He brings home a monkey for Fanny; I shall find something for you and Georgie the moment I can. I spent two days at Faro, with the Dukes of Palmella and Terceira. It is a nice town, and everything as cheap as possible: a fowl costs sixpence, fruit and vegetables in abundance, good people, etc. I have got rid of all my passengers, and we are getting into order rapidly. I like much better being an Admiral than Captain. I interfere very little, though sometimes I break out; but I hope to correct that. We have taken a man-of-war schooner in Faro, which I have called the *Eliza*, after you. I think it very probable I shall be able to give Charley the command of a brig, if I get Englishmen to man her.

"June 29th, six o'clock.—I was in hopes to have informed you we had taken Lagos; we shall not be there till to-morrow, and I do not like to keep the steamboat. I shall have it to-morrow. God Almighty bless you all!

"CARLOS DE PONZA."

On the following day, the squadron anchored in Lagos Bay, and Napier wrote to his wife:—

" *Rainha*, Lagos, June 30th.

" I open my letter to say we arrived here this morning. The batteries were abandoned, and all the troops have deserted and gone home. I shall establish the Government here, and make the best of my way to Lisbon, where I hope to do something great. God bless you ! "

From Lagos the *City of Waterford* steamer was despatched to Oporto, and thence to England, with the news of their success ; and after organizing the government and obtaining supplies, on the evening of July 2 Napier put to sea, leaving the steamers to take in fuel and follow him alongshore to Lisbon. At that time he had no certain information of the movements of the Miguelite squadron. A vessel from the Tagus had brought intelligence that it had dropped down to Cascaes and returned the following day ; but this must have been either an invention of her master, or she had been sent to throw the Queen's ships off their guard.

However, at eight o'clock on the following morning (July 3), when off Cape St. Vincent, the officer of the watch reported two sail, then three, then four, till they counted nine. " I was surprised, and, as Sir Richard Strachan said, delighted," writes Napier ; " but the delight was accompanied with a disagreeable sort of feeling, just resembling the sensation of your heart coming up into your mouth and requiring a tolerable gulp to keep it down."*

The enemy's fleet consisted of two line-of-battle ships, the *Don John* and the *Rainha*, two frigates, the *Princess Real* and the *Martin Freitas*, three big corvettes, two brigs and a xebec ; Napier's, of three frigates, the *Rainha de Portugal*, the *Dom Pedro* and the *Donna Maria*, the corvette *Portuense*, the brig *Villa Flor*, and a small schooner, the *Faro*. The disparity in numbers was very great, and in metal enormous, the Miguelite ships mounting 372 guns against the 176 of the Queen's squadron.

Napier immediately dispatched the *Villa Flor* to Lagos for the steamers, and, after approaching within three or four miles of the enemy, he tacked.

" They were formed in two lines," he writes, " having the *Don John*, bearing a commodore's pendant, to windward, supported by the *Rainha* of the line, the *Martin Freitas* and *Princess*

* " Account of the War in Portugal."

Real. The three corvettes and two brigs formed the lee division, opposite the open spaces—all well painted, sails well set, and lines compact. It was a majestic sight, and I turned the hands up to show the crews how well they looked and to exhort them to pay attention to the management of their guns, as the surest means of success. I had never been in a general action, and, although delighted at the prospect before me, I could not but feel appalled at their great superiority and the magnitude of the enterprise I was about to undertake."*

Both squadrons stood in for the land, and Napier feared that the hostile squadron intended to prevent the junction of the steamers, who were in Lagos Bay and considerably to leeward. Accordingly, at 2 p.m. he tacked again and stood towards the enemy. This manœuvre had the desired effect; they tacked also and left the bay open. At five the *Villa Flor* and the steamers joined him, and he took his station about a mile and a half on their weather-beam. The breeze was strong and the sea too rough for him to attempt to board with success, which was the plan of attack he had resolved upon.

Here, he tells us, the enemy committed a grave error. They ought to have stood boldly in, and have either forced him into Lagos Bay to protect the town and steamers, and risk an action at anchor, or have obliged him to fight under the disadvantages of wind and weather, one of which alternatives he must have chosen, unless he were prepared to abandon the town and the steamboats.

During the night the hostile squadrons lay within musket-shot of one another; the Miguelite fleet in two compact lines, Napier's ships, in two, also, ready to take advantage of any favourable opportunity that might offer of bringing on a general action or cutting off any of the enemy's vessels which might drop astern. At daybreak, observing that one of the Miguelite corvettes was about three miles in the rear of the body of the fleet, Napier bore up in two divisions. But the *Don John* tacked to come to her consort's assistance, and there being no possibility of cutting the latter off without risking a general action, he hauled off and regained his station on the enemy's weather-beam.

During the 3rd and 4th, the sea still running high, not a shot

* "War in Portugal."

was fired by either squadron. The Miguelites showed no disposition to bring Napier to action; while he, on his side, dared risk nothing until the weather became sufficiently calm to lay the enemy on board. For he was well aware how much depended on the result of the approaching engagement. If all were not gained, then all would assuredly be lost. A partial success could only serve to prolong for a few weeks the fate of Oporto and of the troops in the Algarves. A complete victory would save both; a defeat would end the civil war at once.

At last, towards daybreak on the 5th, the wind began to drop, and by nine o'clock there was a dead calm. At ten o'clock, there being every prospect of the calm continuing, he resolved to engage, and sent orders to the steamers to close, after which he went to his cabin and wrote to his wife:—

"*Rainha*, going into action,
"July 5th, ten o'clock in the morning, 1833.

"I am now on the point of going into action. If the steamboats do their duty, we shall take all the fleet; they are very strong, but my little squadron will, I hope, destroy them all. God Almighty bless my wife and my beloved children! If I succeed, I shall be a great man—if I fail, you are well provided for. . . ."

Napier had expected from his steamers "great and good support,"* and his astonishment and indignation may be imagined when to a man captains, engineers and crews refused to take the ships in tow, with the exception of Captain Wilson, of the *William the Fourth*, who, with great difficulty, persuaded his men to act.

"Officers and seamen," writes Napier, "came forward with all the money they possessed to bribe the cowards to act, which they refused to do, unless two thousand pounds were laid down on the capstan head for each engineer. This being impossible, they were dismissed the ship with the hearty curses of officers and men."†

The calm had now lasted two hours, and had the steamers taken the frigates in tow, in the Admiral's opinion he would have been able to choose his position and in all probability have gained a bloodless victory; or had his ships been fitted with paddles similar to those used in the *Galatea*, the effect would have

* Don Carlos de Ponza to the Marquis de Loulé, Minister of Marine, July 6th, 1833.

† "War in Portugal."

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been the same. "Never," he says, "did I see before an occasion when they could have been so triumphantly employed."

Towards noon, catspaws here and there indicated an approaching breeze, and the swell had completely subsided. The men were piped to dinner, and the captains came on board the flagship to receive their final instructions.

It had been Napier's original intention to lay the *Don John* on board with the flagship, leaving the other line-of-battle ship to the *Dom Pedro*, and the *Princess Real* frigate to the *Donna Maria*. But the uncertainty of getting alongside of her without being disabled in passing the sternmost ships, and the possibility of a repulse, decided him to abandon this plan, and content himself with throwing the flagship and the *Dom Pedro* on board the *Rainha* of the line, which he calculated on carrying before the *Don John* could come to her assistance.

"This effected," he says, "if not too much disabled, we should be ready to attack the commodore, whom it was important to secure. At all events, we were pretty certain of holding our prize, and I felt quite satisfied that Captain Peak, in the *Donna Maria*, would carry the *Princess Real*, while the *Portuense*, *Villa Flor* and *Faro* schooner should make the most they could of the *Martin Freitas*, leaving the three corvettes and two brigs in the hands of Providence, Who was sure to be on the side of the good cause. At the same time, the steamers took their station to windward, ready for a bolt should the day be lost."

About one o'clock, a steady breeze sprang up from the northward, with smooth water and a clear blue sky—just the weather he required. His squadron was then about seven miles to the south-west of Cape St. Vincent, the enemy nearly two miles to the south-west of him, formed in two compact lines, with their heads to the westward.

The crews were at quarters, all impatient to come to blows with the enemy, and, the council of war being concluded, the Admiral wrote to his wife :—

"*One o'clock.* The steamboat captains have behaved like cowards and will do nothing. A breeze has sprung up, and we shall very soon be at work. I can fancy your anxiety at Purbrook, when you hear the fleet is out; and I know you would be delighted if you could see the beautiful sight I have now to leeward of me. I am very comfortable, and as firm as a rock. Charley commands all the main-deck guns and is delighted. Officers and ship's company staunch to the backbone.

"Your own,

"NAPIER."

He then sat down to a hasty dinner with Commodore Wilkinson and Captains Goble, Blackstone, Pearn, Charles Elers Napier, Ruxton and Macdonough, the last of whom had quitted the steamers in disgust. They discussed the approaching action with the utmost confidence, little thinking that in half an hour three of the party would have ceased to live or be mortally wounded and two more dangerously. They felt that they were Britons, engaged in a good cause, and about to fight in the same waters where their countrymen had won honour before, and that, great as were the odds against them, victory would assuredly be theirs.

At two o'clock the captains returned to their ships; the boats were lowered down; the signal was made for battle and close order; and the squadron, led by the *Rainha*, with the Constitutional flag at each masthead and at the peak, gradually edged away under their courses and top-gallant sails.

"The breeze was good," continues Napier, "the water smooth, not a cloud in the heavens; the enemy looked well and firm, and they were plainly seen training their guns as we approached. It was a trying and awful sight, one accompanied with a considerable degree of dread (at least, I can answer for myself). Officers and men were calm and determined, though aware of the danger of the enterprise, the success of which mainly depended on the state we should be in after the first broadside."

The enemy kept their line close and reserved their fire until the *Rainha* was within musket-shot of the *Princess Real* frigate, the sternmost ship of their weather-line. The latter then threw out a signal, and, on this being answered by the Miguelite commodore, opened her broadside, which was immediately followed by the two ships ahead of her, and by the stern and quarter-guns of the *Don John*.

"It was indeed a most tremendous fire," writes one of the officers of the *Rainha*, "and we subsequently estimated that ninety-eight guns were fired at us almost at the same moment from the four enemy's ships of the weather line, besides those from the lee line, through the openings."

The sea around the flagship is described by Napier as "bubbling like a boiling cauldron"; while the officer we have just cited declares that "to him it seemed as if all the grampuses of the ocean had taken part with Dom Miguel, and at a

preconcerted signal had made a furious attack upon our ship—so much did the ricocheting of the enemy's shot on the water resemble the 'blowings' of a host of these animals." Nevertheless, little damage was done to the *Rainha's* hull, and when the smoke cleared away, the astonished Miguelites beheld her "proudly floating on the waters of Nelson and St. Vincent, with her masts erect, her rigging and sails only showing the fiery ordeal she had gone through."

The wise precaution having been taken to order the men to lie down at their quarters, few were hit on the main deck; but the three foremost guns on the quarter-deck were nearly cleared, and Lieutenant Knyvett, of the Marines, mortally wounded. The men were quickly on their legs, and some of the foremost guns on the port side were fired, reloaded, and the gunners ordered to lie down again.

The flagship's example was followed by the *Dom Pedro*, and the two vessels soon passed the *Princess Real* and the *Martin Freitas*, the latter's fore top-mast being carried away by a lucky shot. The Miguelite line-of-battle ship *Rainha* luffed to, in order to bring her starboard guns the better to bear upon her adventurous namesake. To avoid this, the Admiral ordered the flagship's helm to be put up, so that he might pass under her stern. At the same moment, the *Don John* bore up across her consort's bows, intending to place the frigate between the two line-of-battle ships. This was just what Napier desired, and when the *Don John* had passed too far to leeward to recover a weather position, the flagship's helm was put suddenly down. Up she flew, grazing the *Rainha's* stern with her flying jib-boom, her whole broadside, crammed to the muzzles with round and grape, being poured into the enemy in passing, as the guns could be brought to bear. At so short a distance—only about fifty feet—for a shot to miss was out of the question, and the effect on the Miguelites was staggering. The frigate's helm was then shifted, and she ran alongside, under a heavy musketry fire, which struck down the Admiral's secretary, the master and several men.

But let us listen to the officer already cited, whose account of certain stages in the battle is far more detailed than that given by the Admiral, either in his "War in Portugal" or his despatches :—

NAPIER'S VICTORY OVER THE MIGUELITE FLEET.

Off Cape St. Vincent, July 5, 1833: Napier's flagship alongside the enemy's line-of-battle ship "Rainha."

[To face p. 104.

MERCHISTOUN HALL, HORNDEAN, HAMPSHIRE.

See p. 142.]

To face p. 105.

" The few men left from those who had been swept away from the quarter-deck guns by the *Rainha's* preliminary broadside and the effect of her musketry had rushed forward to board, so that there only remained on our quarter-deck the Admiral, Captain Pearn (whose position, as in duty bound, was close to him throughout), and the two seamen at the wheel.

" Captain Pearn immediately seized the main-sheet, assisted by one of the seamen from the wheel, the other helping the Admiral, who himself lent a hand to clear away the rope. The man assisting the Master of the Fleet [Captain Pearn] was knocked overboard by a shot through both his thighs, whilst Captain Pearn succeeded in getting from the *Rainha* frigate's quarter-davit to under the *Rainha* line-of-battle ship's main-chains, where he made the rope fast, Admiral Napier, with his own hands, belaying it to the main-sheet cleet; and Pearn went back to the frigate by the same rope.

" Our helm having meanwhile been left aport, whilst probably the other—the *Rainha's*—was astarboard, caused the two ships to separate forward, after a very few men had got on board the enemy. This checked the boarders and left Wilkinson and young Charley Napier—who were the first to board—for several minutes with little or no support.

" The Master of the Fleet, observing this, ordered the helm to be shifted, ran along the port gangway, and from the fore-rigging threw the bight of a rope over the fluke of the *Rainha's* waist-anchor. This checked the ship alongside again, and the remainder of the men then scrambled on board, which from a low frigate to a high line-of-battle ship was no easy matter to effect.

" I saw my young friend Charley Napier and Commodore Wilkinson go foremost over the enemy's hammock-netting ' neck and neck '—it was a close race and impossible to say which of the two was first on board. The Admiral boarded as Captain Pearn was lashing the *Rainha* line-of-battle ship's anchor to our fore-rigging; and as soon as he accomplished this, the latter followed his chief without loss of time.

" It had been settled that neither the Admiral nor the Master of the Fleet was to have boarded, but in the enthusiasm and excitement of the moment they could not refrain from joining, and soon found themselves on the deck of the enemy's line-of-battle ship."

Napier, in his " War in Portugal," confirms this:

" I had not intended to board," he says, " but the excitement was too great, and I found myself, without hardly knowing it, on the enemy's forecastle, supported by one or two officers. Then I paused, till several men jumping on board, we rushed aft with a loud cheer, and either passed through or drove back a party drawn up on the break of the quarter-deck. At this moment I received a severe blow from a crowbar, and poor Macdonough fell at my side by a musket-ball. Barredas, the captain of the ship, came across me wounded in the face and fighting like a tiger. He was a brave man. I saved his life. The second captain came next, and made so good-natured a cut at me, that I had not the heart to hurt

him ; he also was spared. Barredas took up arms again, and was finally killed in the cabin.

"The Commodore [Wilkinson] and Captain Charles Napier, after driving a whole host before them, fell severely wounded on the larboard side of the quarter-deck. The former with difficulty regained his ship ; the latter, being stunned, lay some time, till the noise of friends coming to his assistance roused him from his stupor."*

The quarter-deck was now gained, but the main and lower deck were still unsubdued ; and, as the *Dom Pedro* ranged up on the opposite side to board, both ships fired. Napier was in the act of hailing Captain Goble to cease firing and to follow the *Don John*, who was making off, when a musket-shot was fired from one of the ports on the enemy *Rainha's* main-deck, and Goble fell mortally wounded.

Immediately afterwards, Lieutenants Edmunds and Wooldridge, the second and signal lieutenants of the frigate, jumped down at the head of a party of seamen upon the main-deck and carried it, though not before both officers had received wounds to which they afterwards succumbed. The enemy who were defending the lower deck then threw down their arms, many of them rushing on to the quarter-deck for safety, with white canvas on their arms, having perceived that this was the badge worn by the flagship's men in boarding.

* General Elers Napier gives some interesting particulars regarding his brother's adventures in this memorable action :—

"Commodore Wilkinson and young Napier were first on the enemy's deck. At this moment the two ships yawed apart, thus leaving them for a few minutes alone and unsupported. During this time they were surrounded by their enemies, but defended themselves gallantly, slashing away right and left, until Napier was unfortunately disarmed by his sword becoming fixed between the ramrod and muzzle of a musket, and being thus wrenched from his hand. Young, vigorous, and endowed with extraordinary activity, he sprang, unarmed as he was, on his foremost assailant, seized him with the left hand by the throat, and with the other planting a well-directed blow in his face, sent him headforemost over among the guns, but was also dragged down in the fall. During this death-struggle, blows were mercilessly showered on him from behind. He received two very severe sabre-cuts on the head, a violent contusion from the butt-end of a musket, by which he was stunned ; and, while thus helpless and prostrate, many other bayonet thrusts and sabre-cuts were inflicted on various parts of his body, amounting in all to fifteen in number, though some, it is true, were very slight. But the injuries his head received on this occasion rendered him partially deaf for the remainder of his life. This occupied a much shorter time than it has taken to relate, and my brother was happily rescued from certain death by the arrival of the Admiral at the head of the rest of the boarders. I have still in my possession the sword used by my gallant brother in this action. It is a heavy cavalry sabre, which had been the gift of an esteemed friend, and he is said to have slain with it five of his assailants. I have also the clothes that he wore on this occasion ; they are pierced and cut in every direction, and perforated in one place by a musket-ball."

The men were now ordered back to the frigate, with the exception of those who had been selected to man the prize, and in the hurry the ships separated, leaving Napier on board the liner. He soon, however, got back to the flagship, which, with tottering masts, sails cut to shreds, with about one-third of her crew killed, wounded or left in the prize, and with only one officer—he slightly wounded—and a midshipman besides the Admiral on board, was hardly in a very fit condition to try conclusions with a fresh enemy, in the shape of a line-of-battle ship like the *Don John*. However, notwithstanding these discouraging conditions, all hands were immediately set to work; the masts were secured as best they could, the foretop-sail, which had been cut to rags, was shifted, the rigging knotted, the ropes spliced, and the frigate was fast overhauling the *Don John*, the *Dom Pedro* being still nearer, when the enemy, seeing no chance of avoiding an action, luffed-to and struck her colours, without firing a shot.

Meanwhile, Captain Peak, in the *Donna Maria*, passed under the *Princess Real's* stern, raked her, luffed-to, and, after firing a few broadsides, ran his bowsprit into her mizen-rigging, and boarded and carried her in gallant style. The *Martin Freitas*, however, proved too strong for the *Portuense* (whose captain, Blackstone, was mortally wounded), and the *Villa Flor*, and though they knocked away her fore-topmast and otherwise damaged her, she kept her colours up and endeavoured to escape. Leaving the *Dom Pedro* to take charge of the *Don John*, the Admiral gave chase to the disabled ship, who surrendered before sunset. One of the Miguelite corvettes surrendered also; the rest of the squadron ran before the wind and succeeded in effecting their escape.

Thus the action terminated, leaving in Napier's possession two ships-of-the-line, one mounting 80 guns, including 4 forty-eight pounders for firing shells, the other 76; a frigate of 56 guns, another of 48 guns, and a corvette of 18 guns. Of the two corvettes and two brigs who escaped, the corvettes reached Lisbon in safety; one of the brigs, the *Audaz*, joined the victorious squadron the following day. The losses of the Constitutionalists were about 90 killed and wounded, including 12 officers, 8 of whom either fell in the action or succumbed to their wounds. The enemy's casualties were between two and three hundred.

Napier, in his history of the civil war, declares that " at no time was a naval action fought with such a disparity of force." This, as the late Sir John Knox Laughton has pointed out, implies more than the fact, since the disparity in numbers and weight of metal was to a large extent counterbalanced by the fact that the Miguelite officers were incompetent, and the crews untrained and none too well disposed towards the cause they were fighting for. Napier himself tells us that after the action they " to a man declared for the Queen."* Nevertheless, when all allowance has been made for this, the victory of St. Vincent remains a notable achievement, while the skill and gallantry displayed in the boarding and carrying of the enemy's *Rainha*, a line-of-battle ship of 86 guns, by a frigate of 46 guns, were worthy of the best traditions of the British Navy.

* " Dictionary of National Biography : " Article, Admiral Sir Charles Napier.

CHAPTER X

NAPIER AT LISBON

BY midnight the prizes were manned and their crews secured, and the victorious squadron was in full sail for Lagos, where it arrived the following morning, and was received with great acclamations by the inhabitants, "who vied with each other in showering down blessings on the people they were pleased to call their deliverers from the most unheard-of tyranny that ever oppressed a nation."* Detachments were landed to pay the last tributes to the officers and men who had fallen, and all the principal citizens followed the funeral procession.

In the afternoon of the 9th, the Duke of Palmella and Mendizabal arrived from Faro, "half mad with joy at this unexpected event," and Napier hastened to make the necessary arrangements with regard to the captured vessels and their crews. The Queen's service was proposed to, and accepted by, a few of the officers who were known to be Constitutionalists; the Commodore and the rest, who declined, were sent prisoners to Faro. The whole

* "The War in Portugal:" "The manifestations of joy led in one instance to a rather ludicrous scene, which is amusingly related by one of the officers of the flagship: 'Scarcely had the Admiral's ship cast anchor when a deputation from the municipality, consisting of about a dozen worthy gentlemen, dressed in ample black gowns, and each provided with a long, tapering rod, came alongside, in order to felicitate "Don Carlos de Ponza" on his brilliant victory over the usurper's fleet. Two of the party carried a sort of large silver salver, on which, covered by a rich silken canopy, was "a large and handsome wreath or crown of evergreens," which, after the reading of a long address in Portuguese, they essayed to place on Napier's head.

"'He had up to this time behaved most admirably, and with all the dignity and gravity becoming his position, and that of the personage who had read him the long address. But when they proceeded to crown him with laurels, he could stand it no longer—he was like a bull shaking his head when an attempt is made to throw a rope over his head. They next tried to talk him over, but it was all in vain. . . . The Admiral told them that we were ALL heroes—to put the crown on the table, and that we would each have our share. This was done; he pulled out a sprig, which he placed in the buttonhole of his coat; we all followed his example, and the beautiful wreath soon became a complete wreck.'"

of the seamen declared for the Queen, though a considerable number of them seized the first opportunity to desert.

The flagship and the *Martin Freitas* had been so badly knocked about in the recent action, that it was found necessary to leave them at Lagos to refit, and Napier shifted his flag into the *Don John*, and manned her from his late ship and the *Dom Pedro*. The captain of the *Princess Real* was appointed to the *Dom Pedro*, which was manned from the *Don John*. Marcel Pedro, the Miguelite captain of the *Martin Freitas*, who had defended his ship well, was appointed to the *Rainha*, and, as many of the crew of that vessel had deserted at Lagos, she was completed from the *Don John* and the *Martin Freitas*. Captain Ruxton, of the *Villa Flor*, was appointed to the frigate; Lieutenant Leot, first lieutenant on the late flagship, to the *Villa Flor*, and Charles Elers Napier to the *Portuense*. Having thus judiciously distributed the officers and crews of the victorious and conquered vessels, every effort was made to refit the squadron; and Pedroites and Miguelites worked with such good will in repairing damages, that in a very few days all the ships, with the exception of the two mentioned above, were fit for service.

Meanwhile, the Duke of Terceira had taken Loulé and São Bartholomeu, and cleared practically the whole of the Algarves of the enemy. He was at Loulé, whence he was about to march on Beja by way of Mertola, when the news of Napier's victory over the Miguelite fleet reached him. He at once hastened to Lagos, where the Admiral agreed to place a couple of hundred Portuguese marines, who had volunteered to join his force, at the duke's disposal. Thus reinforced, and relying on the effect produced by the action of the 5th, Terceira resolved on a bold move, namely, to cross the Sierra de Monchique and advance on Lisbon through the Alemtejo. Accordingly, on the 12th, he united his forces at São Bartholomeu, and on the following day began his march for the capital.

The same evening Napier sailed for Lisbon in the *Don John*, accompanied by the *Portuense*, the *Rainha*, the *Dom Pedro* and the *Princess Real* frigate. The next day he met the Marquis of St. Iria, who had been appointed governor of the Algarves, and was the bearer of letters informing him that the Emperor had promoted him to the rank of full Admiral in the Portuguese Navy, and ennobled him by the title of Viscount Cape St.

Vincent. "All this was very gratifying," writes Napier, "but I should have preferred the latter part to have been left alone."*

He now found himself called upon to face a much worse enemy than Dom Miguel's fleet. During the time the squadron had lain in Lagos Bay, the men had worked hard and had fallen into the irregularities very common in harbour, and more particularly after an action. Symptoms of cholera made their appearance on the flagship before she sailed, and the late master of the *Dom Pedro* had died of the disease. On the 14th, off Cape St. Vincent, it broke out with the greatest violence. "Men were seen walking about, apparently in perfect health, and in a moment they were stricken down, and before sunset nearly a hundred were in the hands of the medical officers; they were lying about all parts of the ship in the agony of collapse. Their messmates employed friction and every means they could think of to alleviate their sufferings, but in vain; seven died the first night."

Every means was taken to combat the disease. The orlop deck was cleared and converted into a cholera hospital, and the surgeons and their assistants worked unceasingly. But the disease progressed with such rapid strides, that their exertions were quite unable to keep pace with it, and it frequently happened that while they were attending to some patients, others were taken ill and fell into a state of collapse before any assistance could be rendered.

"A gloom came over the crew," writes Napier; "they became stupefied with fear, not knowing at what moment they might be attacked. The same men who a fortnight before had fought and conquered the Miguelite fleet were now unmanned and unfit for any exertion. After the action they had shifted a topsail from the store-room in less than half an hour, and were ready to fight a second ship-of-the-line; they were now upwards of twelve hours shifting the *Don John's* main-topsail."

The cholera stuck with the utmost tenacity to the *Don John*, and the Admiral was strongly urged to transfer his flag to another ship and send the *Don John* out to sea to the westward. He refused, however, to quit the post of danger. At last, after the epidemic had lasted a week, by which time at least two hundred men had passed through the surgeons' hands, and about

* "War in Portugal."

fifty into the next world, orders were given to steer to the westward, when it quickly disappeared.

On the 19th, Napier had received a communication from the Duke of Terceira that the revolt of Beja, which had declared for the Queen, had drawn away the Miguelite force which lay between him and Lisbon, and that he had decided to march straight upon the capital. The bad sailing of the squadron and northerly winds delayed the Admiral so long, that it was not until the evening of the 24th that he came abreast of the mouth of the Tagus, and he was in great anxiety lest the failure of the expected co-operation of the warships should have ruined all the duke's plans, and was immensely relieved when a British brig-of-war brought him the welcome intelligence that Lisbon had been abandoned by the Miguelites the night before, and was now occupied by Terceira's troops.

"The Government were so afraid that I would run into the Tagus," he writes to his wife, "that they abandoned the town and left Lisbon without even a police to hinder the throats of their friends from being cut. Villa Flor [Terceira] crossed over and took possession of Lisbon, and the wind so failed me, that I did not get in before the 25th. Had they shown the least courage, Villa Flor would have been destroyed, and the whole expedition would have failed."

Next morning, leaving the ships at the entrance of the river, all the defences of which had been abandoned by the enemy during the night, Napier and the Duke of Palmella entered a boat and were rowed up the Tagus. Their first visit was to the British squadron, under Rear-Admiral Parker, which had been sent to Lisbon to protect British interests during the civil war. On board the *Asia*, Parker's flagship, a most flattering reception awaited them.

"I was received with a captain's guard," writes Napier, "the Admiral and all the officers on deck, and a salute fired, the yards manned, and I was cheered by all the ship's company. As I went past the other ships, they cheered me also, and, in short, my reception was most gratifying."

From the *Asia* they proceeded to the Arsenal, where an enormous crowd was assembled. "Nothing could exceed the reception we met with; the whole population was drunk with joy. I was hailed as the Liberator of Portugal, cheered, kissed and embraced by everybody."

At the Arsenal they found a gorgeous equipage drawn by four splendid horses awaiting them. It had been sent for them by the Baron Quintello, the wealthiest man in Portugal, and in it they proceeded to the baron's house, which stood in the square of the same name. "All Lisbon seemed crammed into this place, and the *vivas* for the Queen, Dom Pedro, Palmella and myself were loud and continued beyond all description."*

For some days nothing was thought of by the population of Lisbon, freed after five years from the tyranny of Dom Miguel, but eating, drinking and rejoicing; and had the Duke of Cadaval, the recent governor of the city, shown the least enterprise, he might easily have collected sufficient troops to turn the tables upon the Constitutionalists. Napier endeavoured to impress upon his colleagues the necessity of securing the capital by proper defensive measures, unless they wished to see it lost as easily as it had been won; but until the energetic Dom Pedro arrived his representations were of no effect.

The news of the occupation of Lisbon had reached Oporto on the night of the 26th†, and the Emperor resolved to proceed at once to the capital. On the evening of the 27th, he embarked on board the steamer *William the Fourth*, leaving Saldanha in command at Oporto, and arrived the following day in Lisbon, where he was received with boundless enthusiasm.

"The moment the salutes from St. Julian and the Bougie announced his approach," writes Napier, "the news spread rapidly through the town; every vessel and boat was put in requisition; and before the steamer with the royal standard had passed Belem, the now peaceful waters of the Tagus bore on their surface all the beauty and fashion of Lisbon, hastening to meet and welcome the Emperor to the capital of his ancestors. It was, indeed, a brilliant sight, and what with rockets, fireworks and salutes from the batteries and ships, there was more powder burnt than would have fought a general action."

Napier was the first to board the steamer, and "was met on the gangway by the Emperor, who fairly pulled him out of the

* "The War in Portugal."

† On the preceding day, the besieging army, of which Maréchal de Bourmont, the conqueror of Algiers, had recently assumed the command, had delivered a determined attack on the town, but it had been repulsed with considerable loss.

boat and embraced him in the warmest Portuguese fashion." His Majesty repeatedly thanked him for the services he had performed, placed him on his right hand, in his own seat, at the "Te Deum" at the Largo Palace, and gave him the post of honour at dinner.

With that affection for his family which was so strong a feature in his character, Napier was planning to bring them out to Portugal; and in a letter to his wife, written on July 31, after giving her an account of his reception by Dom Pedro, he continues :—

"I have got into an excellent house and have also a box at the Opera. I am getting everything ready for you, but I think that you had better not come till I send for you, which I will do the moment I see there is no chance of our being driven out of Lisbon; but you must all be ready for embarking when I send the steamer. As to our beautiful cottage, you may let it or keep it as you please. You may bring out Sancho,* but our carriage is quite useless here.

"Charley has a splendid corvette, and is going to Cadiz and Madeira, to summon the latter place, and if they do not surrender, I shall go and put them to rights. Charley's wounds are entirely healed up. Reeves (Wilkinson) is getting on very well, but slowly; he can now manage to write, and intends doing so by this opportunity. I think you will like Lisbon, for we have everything to make it agreeable—a good house and a good ship, which I am fitting out like the *Galatea*."

In a letter to Admiral George Dundas, dated the 29th, he writes :

"I received a letter from Barrow, desiring me to appear at the Admiralty on the 5th of July. On that day I was busily employed, and could not well get there, so I suppose you have unshipped me."

His name had, as he surmised, been struck off the Navy List, but this, since it was a mere formality, appears to have given him little concern.

Meanwhile, news of the victory off Cape St. Vincent had reached England. Save among the partisans and apologists of Dom Miguel, it was hailed as a British success, and Napier soon found himself overwhelmed with letters of congratulation, so numerous, that one of his biographers assures us that "even to read them amid the pressure of so much business must have been no ordinary task."

* A favourite old horse.

One of the most interesting of these letters was from his predecessor in the command of the Constitutionalist fleet, the gallant and generous-hearted Sartorius :—

"Paris, August 6th, 1833.

"My dear Napier,—Most heartily I congratulate you, my dear friend, upon your noble and gallant action. I have invariably predicted that such would be your conduct. To say that I do not envy you would be hypocrisy on my part; equally so, if I said that I did not regret that it had not been my fate to have gained such a triumph. As it has turned out, upon an honester and a better fellow such splendid good fortune never could have fallen. Long may you live to enjoy it! I have been anxiously looking out for the details of the battle; I have not met with any as yet; but I hope soon to do so. . . . I am still in France, as I cannot yet hear whether it will be safe for me to appear in England. All my bills were protested which were given me at Oporto. I have heard nothing of the order or letter since. However, the cause of humanity has triumphed at last, thank God! This is no moment for complaining of individual wrongs or ingratitude. For the same cause, and with the certainty of the same results, I would again act as I have done, in spite of wrongs and injustice. . . .

"With every good wish, believe me, my dear Napier,

"Ever truly and sincerely yours,

"G. W. Sartorius."

His old friend Colonel (afterwards Sir George) Hodges wrote :

"London, 24th July, 1833.

"My dear Napier,—Pray accept my sincere and hearty congratulations on the success that has attended your gallant and brilliant capture of Miguel's fleet. Well have you maintained your long and established character, as well as that of the British Navy. All parties do you justice; and I have been told that the King was in ecstasies of delight when he first heard of your exploit. You have saved Portugal, and immortalized yourself. Thank God, you have escaped unhurt and that your gallant son is recovering—he seems 'a chip of the old block.' You will see by the newspapers the handsome way Lord Grey spoke of you in reply to Lord Londonderry ;* as for old Eldon, he was not satisfied with your name

* On July 15th, the Marquis of Londonderry, who, according to the *Times*, "had taken Don Miguel under his immediate patronage (as though the Don was not in enough scrapes already)," asked the Prime Minister in the House of Lords whether Captain Napier, "who appeared to have commanded in a recent naval engagement against the fleet of Don Miguel," was still in His Majesty's service. To which Earl Grey replied that "the Board of Admiralty would, of course, take all those steps which might be deemed necessary when they arrived at a proper knowledge of the facts." At present, he knew nothing more on the subject than what the noble marquis was in possession of."

Questioned again on the matter, with considerable acerbity, by Lord Londonderry three days later, Earl Grey answered that "on the Friday preceding

being erased from the Navy List, he (peevish old soul!) thought hanging not good enough for you. A meeting is spoken of in the City, for the purpose of manifesting public opinion in admiration of your late victory —the Duke of Sussex in the chair. . . ."

Another friend, Mr. William Grant, refers to this meeting and further manifestations of public admiration :—

" Never was there such a burst of feeling from one end of the country to the other. I attended a capital meeting in London some few days ago —the Duke of Sussex in the chair. It was a proud day, and most creditable to the country; no doubt you have seen the particulars. We have (the London and country bankers) collected about £600 as yet towards presenting you with a testimonial, one in commemoration of British valour. A large sum will be raised, and petitions to the King are being forwarded to restore so fair a name to the Navy List. It must be done— the people are enthusiastic upon it. They talk of bringing you forward for the City of London, in room of Sir John Kay. We had also a splendid public fête at Vauxhall, patronized by Sir Edward Codrington, in honour of you. The feeling manifested was truly British. Yesterday, we had a famous dinner here [Portsmouth] in celebration of your action; upwards of 100 dined. It went off very well. Your old friends were not a little proud, I assure you. We had lots of your old opponents there; even they say you must go to Parliament now, if only as a specimen of British valour."

On July 27, Napier, having formed his staff, had assumed the office of Major-General of the Naval Arsenal at Lisbon. So far as the buildings were concerned, it was, he declares, the most complete establishment of its kind that he had ever beheld; but he found everything in a lamentable condition: vessels which had been for years upon the slips rotting in an unfinished state; docks half-filled with mud, their dismantled gates being too feeble to resist the pressure of the water against them; and idleness, mismanagement and inefficiency everywhere. He set to work with his usual energy to remedy this state of affairs, and in a letter to Admiral George Dundas, written two days later, confidently predicts that " he would soon put it to rights and get up a small navy, ready to leather the Spaniards, should they be saucy." But he soon found that the task before him was one of the most difficult imaginable.

[]uly 12th]—and he stated the fact with great regret—(hear, hear)—because, admiring as he did, and as everyone must, the gallantry, the daring, the spirit, the skill—(cheers)—by which Captain Napier had on that occasion distinguished himself—(cheers)—and upheld the character of a British sailor—(cheers)— it was, he said, with great regret that he now stated that that officer had been struck from the list of His Majesty's service."

"No person who has not seen it," he writes, in his history of the war, "can form an idea of the state of the Naval Arsenal at Lisbon; it was the receptacle for the blind, the lame, and the lazy. If a man were unfit for anything else, interest was made to get him a place in the Arsenal. The establishment consisted of between two and three thousand, certainly, the worst artificers to be found in the whole country. There was hardly an official in the establishment fit for his situation, and it was quite indifferent to them whether the men worked or not. In fact, they were sleeping about in all directions, and even when they did work, took special care to do it in the manner most pleasant and agreeable to themselves, anything like fatigue being quite out of the question. The inefficiency and indolence of the workmen in the Naval Arsenal was proverbial."

On August 14, a steamer arrived from England, bringing the long-expected recognition of Donna Maria da Gloria as Queen of Portugal by the British Government, and letters accrediting Lord William Russell as Minister at her Court, or rather at that of Dom Pedro, who had assumed the Regency during his daughter's minority.

That prince appeared to consider that his daughter's cause had now definitely triumphed, and not only sent for the young Queen, but announced that the Cortes would assemble on the following October 1. In point of fact, the occupation of the capital by the Constitutionalists had made very little impression on the country; the towns through which Terceira had passed in his triumphant march had again fallen into the hands of the enemy; and Maréchal de Bourmont, at the head of a large force, was advancing towards Lisbon. In that city all was quiet, but everything without indicated a long and bloody civil war.

Though Napier had constantly pressed on the Emperor and the military authorities the necessity of taking measures for the defence of Lisbon, nothing had yet been done. They seemed unable to believe that the Miguelites, who had evacuated the capital in such pusillanimous fashion, would make any serious attempt to recover it.

"I have written to the Admiral Dundas," Napier writes to his wife, "to give you a passage out in the steamer that conveys the Queen, as I am not sure when I could send another steamer for you. We hear the enemy are advancing on Lisbon. We have been three weeks here, and

have not yet mounted a single gun. It is abominable! I have spoken plainly enough to the Minister and the Emperor, and to-day I have been myself examining the defences,' and find that nothing is more easy than to defend the town.

"I am most anxious to see you, but still I almost wish any further business may be over first. I should not be surprised if they yet lost Lisbon. If they do, it will be by their own folly; and I will stay with them no longer if it happens. . . . Charley has got his corvette in high order, and is now ready for sea. I am not yet sure when he will sail, as I am uncertain about the movements of the enemy."*

So far as his own department was concerned, the Admiral had already taken effective measures. By dint of continual driving and a rigid supervision, he had contrived to infuse some degree of activity into the indolent officials and artisans of the Arsenal, with the result that the squadron was tolerably well fitted out. The larger ships he reserved for the immediate defence of Lisbon, the smaller he employed to establish a blockade of the ports still in the hands of the Miguelites.

He had, however, a good deal of trouble with the seamen. "I am sorry to say our men have been behaving very ill," he writes to Mr. Grant. "They are a bad set; it is heartrending, after such an action, to see it. . . . I sent for the petty officers. They told me the men were discontented and wanted to go home; that they could not get them to work, for they said they would give up their pay and prize-money to go home. I took the gentlemen at their word, told them to give in their names, which amounted to eighty—all the worst characters. I hired a vessel for them; they then abused the captain, said they would not go home, that they would take his vessel from him, and behaved worse than ever. The greater part went on shore and got beastly drunk. At last I took strong measures, and put them all in prison, on bread and water for the first few days, and since that I hope, I have broke the neck of it. . . . To give you an idea what a gang they must be—they had at least £500 or £600, and we (the officers) never received £5; they robbed the hen-coops; and I believe, had I been at sea, there is a gang who would have cut all our throats. Could I have picked out a couple of the worst, I certainly would have hanged them; but they were too clever for that."

On September 3, Bourmont, whose Staff included a number

* Letter of August 12, 1833.

of experienced French officers, Legitimist exiles like himself, appeared before Lisbon, and occupied the neighbouring heights and all the adjacent villages. His army was computed at between 14,000 and 15,000 men; the Queen's forces probably amounted to about 9,000. According to Napier, such had been the apathy of the defenders, that not a spade had been put into the ground until the enemy had passed Coimbra, and though upwards of a hundred guns had been mounted on the lines, the works were not finished, and in many places afforded the troops very little protection.

About 7 a.m. on the morning of the 5th, Bourmont attacked the redoubts in the neighbourhood of St. Sebastian. After some sharp fighting, the assailants were repulsed, though not without considerable losses, amongst which were several officers. The Duke of Terceira's horse was shot under him, and Dom Pedro had a narrow escape, a round-shot from one of the Miguelite batteries killing a man who stood close to him.

In a letter to his wife, written the day previously, the Admiral had declared that "he should confine himself to his own part, without putting his head where he had no business." However, the temptation was too strong to be resisted, and he took up his station in a spot which proved to be "just as hot as any amateur could wish."

About two o'clock in the afternoon, the Miguelites delivered a second attack; and the Admiral again found himself in a warm corner. In the redoubt in which he was the guns were very imperfectly manned, and they were very short of ammunition, and had the enemy pressed boldly forward in column formation, they would probably have forced that part of the lines. The Miguelites, however, followed their usual practice when under a sharp fire, and, instead of advancing in mass formation, broke their ranks and spread out as skirmishers, with the result that they could make no impression on the defence. Half an hour later, a squadron of cavalry, led by Louis de la Rochejaquelein, a member of the famous Vendéan family, made a desperate attempt to gallop into the redoubt under cover of a wall. The gallant young Frenchman was shot dead close to the ditch, where many men and horses fell, and the survivors retreated in confusion.

Firing continued until dark, but no further attack was

attempted by the enemy, and at night they were driven from the buildings under cover of which they had advanced, and which were forthwith razed to the ground.

From this time Bourmont appears to have abandoned all idea of taking the town by assault and to have decided to reduce it by a blockade. But without the co-operation of a naval force, and with Napier's squadron in the Tagus, this would have required a much larger army than he had at his disposal, and even then might not have been practicable.

About the middle of September, taking advantage of some communications which were going on between Admiral Parker and Bourmont, relative to the protection of British property, Napier endeavoured to bring about an accommodation with the Miguelite general, but without success. This was winked at by the Emperor, but not authorized; and, indeed, as the *sine quâ non* was the retirement of Dom Miguel from Portugal, it was at once refused.

On the 21st, Bourmont resigned his command, and was succeeded by a General Macdowell, who had formerly served in Spain. He had arrived a few days before at St. Martinho from England, in the steamer *Lord of the Isles* (which was afterwards captured by a gunboat fitted out by the governor of Peniché), and was accompanied by several French officers and by Captain Elliott of the Royal Navy, who was to have commanded Dom Miguel's fleet, had there been any fleet to command, but was now obliged to content himself with the post of "Naval Adviser."

The change of generals was not followed by any change in the military operations, and the enemy remained in front of Lisbon, without undertaking any enterprise on either bank of the Tagus.

CHAPTER XI

"A LITTLE SOLDIERING ASHORE"

ON September 22, the young Queen of Portugal and her step-mother, the Empress, arrived in the Tagus in the *Soho* steamer, escorted by a British steamship-of-war. Dom Pedro immediately embarked on "a magnificent boat of twenty-four oars and forty-eight men, painted blue and white, the men being dressed in the same manner," and was rowed out to the steamer, accompanied only by Admiral Napier and a couple of aides-de-camp. The young Queen is described by Napier as "fair, about the middle-size, with a plump and handsome face, and a great deal of *embonpoint*." She appeared to be of a shy and retiring disposition and said little; nevertheless, both she and the Empress were very gracious to the Admiral, who had the honour of dining with the Royal Family, and "thought that he had never seen a more happy party."*

Soon after noon the following day, Maria da Gloria landed and proceeded, through the midst of enthusiastic crowds, to the Cathedral, where a "Te Deum" was sung. On the 24th, she reviewed her troops, and on the 25th held a court at the Bemposta, where for the first time she sat on her throne, with the Empress on her left, and the Emperor below them. In the evening there was a State dinner at the Necessidades Palace, at which Napier was present. He remarked that the meal was a simple one, that the Emperor drank nothing but water, and that the wine was of poor quality.

Napier had been much disappointed at the non-arrival of his family at the same time as the Queen, but the accommodation on board the *City of Waterford*, the steamer which was to have brought them out, proved insufficient; and so they merely sent their baggage by this vessel and themselves took their departure

* "The War in Portugal."

from England a few days subsequently in another steamer, the *Superb*. This proved a fortunate circumstance, as the *City of Waterford* was wrecked off the Portuguese coast not far from Peniché, and, although her passengers were saved, everything else on board, including the Napiers' baggage and the Queen's carriages, went to the bottom of the sea.

The *Superb*, which likewise experienced a very rough passage and was nearly lost off Coruña, reached Lisbon safely on October 2, bringing not only the Admiral's family, but the Marquis de Loulé and his wife—Dom Pedro's youngest sister—the Duchess of Terceira and the Swedish Minister, M. de Kanzou, and his wife. The Marquis de Loulé had resigned the portfolio of Minister of Marine, in order to go to England to fetch the marchioness, and Napier was hopeful that on his return he would resume office. But the marquis, an honourable and upright man, was so disgusted with the conduct of his former colleagues, that he declined to have anything further to do with the administration of affairs.

The Miguelite army still remained before Lisbon, but showed no disposition to renew the assault, while the Emperor and his Ministers did not consider themselves sufficiently strong to attempt to drive them from their position. Meanwhile, guerilla bands, acting in the usurper's interests, were overrunning the southern provinces of the Alemtejo and the Algarves, and committing all kinds of atrocities, and Lagos, which, it will be remembered, had been in the possession of the Queen's party since the end of June, was invested by the enemy. The governor applied in vain for provisions and reinforcements, but Dom Pedro's Ministers appeared in no hurry to send them; and the place would in all probability have soon fallen, had not Napier taken upon himself to despatch a body of British marines thither, backed by the frigate *Donna Maria*, and forced the Miguelites to raise the siege. On his own initiative, also, he took measures for the defence of Setubal, or St. Ubes, the second best port in the kingdom, which he feared the enemy might attempt to seize.

By the second week in October, the enemy before Lisbon, ill-paid, ill-clothed and ill-fed, had begun to suffer much from sickness, while desertion was also thinning their ranks. Saldanha —now a marshal—who had been entrusted with the defence of the lines, thereupon decided upon an offensive movement,

which was carried out on October 10. It was so far successful that the enemy abandoned their positions before the town and fell back on Santarem, which henceforth became Dom Miguel's headquarters, whilst Saldanha occupied Cartaxo. But, if we are to believe Napier, their retreat, which was carried out in good order and with comparatively little loss, might very well have become a crushing defeat for the Miguelites, had Saldanha made him acquainted in time with his plans, which would have enabled him to send a flotilla up the Tagus to bombard the enemy as they crossed the river. But the whole affair appears to have been mismanaged, and, if the Miguelite general had possessed any enterprise, instead of retreating, he might have turned Saldanha's right flank, forced the lines, which were very thinly held, and secured the capital.

The enemy having raised the siege of Lisbon, it was no longer considered necessary to keep up so large a naval establishment, and Napier endeavoured to carry into effect a number of reforms which he considered necessary for the efficiency of the service.

" I was foolish enough to think that nothing was more easy," he writes; " but I soon found out that from the Minister to the lowest clerk in the establishment I was opposed by every species of intrigue."

Freire d'Amade, who had succeeded the Marquis de Loulé as Minister of Marine, also held the portfolio of War, although he was much too incapable and indolent to occupy even one of these important posts with success, leave alone both, and " his office was filled by twenty or thirty clerks lounging over their desks, the two principal ones as great intriguers as were to be found in Lisbon."

By a decree of the Cortes in 1820 the " Board of Admiralty " had been abolished and replaced by the office of Major-General of the Armada, which Napier now filled. Former major-generals had been completely subservient to the Minister of Marine, and, as no Minister had ever yet possessed any knowledge of naval matters, and as, whenever the Government was hard pressed for money—which happened pretty frequently—the naval department was always the first to suffer, it had fallen into a deplorable condition. No stores could be obtained except of bad quality and at an exorbitant price, it being quite a lottery when the contractors would get their accounts settled, and those who

had the most interest with the Minister of Marine, or who knew how to apply a *douceur* in the proper quarter, were the first paid. After a great deal of trouble, the Admiral succeeded in getting this remedied to some extent, but he quickly found himself in collision with Freire on the question of the promotion of officers.

On first taking command of the Constitutionalist fleet, Napier had been authorized by the Emperor to promote officers, and, availing himself of this power, he had, shortly after arriving at Lisbon, promoted several of the most deserving. This, however, alarmed Freire, who represented to the Emperor that the promotions ought to be submitted to the Minister of Marine for his approbation, and though, on the Admiral's appeal, Dom Pedro ordered the officers to be confirmed, he did so without acknowledging his right to promote without the approval of the Minister.

The Admiral continued to promote as before without consulting the Minister, but found that the latter, or rather an official called the "Director of Countability," always had it in his power to nullify his promotions, by refusing to give the additional pay corresponding to the higher rank. In great indignation, he again appealed to the Emperor, referring him to the conditions upon which he had accepted the command of the fleet. But Dom Pedro replied that the arrangement in question was only intended to be a temporary one, and that he himself, as Regent, had not the power of promoting an officer on the field of battle, without the concurrence of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

It would perhaps have been well for Napier had he forthwith tendered his resignation—certainly, he would have spared himself many of the troubles and annoyances which he subsequently experienced. But he did not wish to leave Portugal before the civil war had been brought to an end and the cause for which he had drawn the sword had triumphed. And so he remained at his post, and continued to labour as energetically and as indefatigably as ever, in spite of the difficulties which beset him on every side.

In his efforts to reform the Naval Arsenal he was allowed a comparatively free hand; that is to say, he was not subject to any interference from without. But within he had to encounter a sort of organized opposition on the part of officials and workmen, who combined together to evade his orders.

When he happened to be present, all was bustle and activity; but no sooner did he take his departure than idleness and sleep once more descended upon the establishment, though such was the dread with which he had contrived to inspire its inmates, that before settling down to a siesta or a game of cards, they usually took the precaution to post sentinels to give warning of his approach. In such circumstances, we can well understand that his projected reforms were not very readily carried into effect.

The constant friction between himself and the Ministry of Marine was not the only source of annoyance to Napier at this time, for when towards the end of the year a copy of the "Navy List" for July, 1833 reached him, he found, to his disgust, that the Admiralty, not content with removing his name, had also deprived him of his Greenwich out-pension, the reward of services performed and of wounds received. This would appear to have been an action entirely without precedent, and he lost no time in writing to the Secretary of the Admiralty, begging him "to convey to their lordships his surprise, as well as his regret, that a Government of such liberal principles should have been the first to have visited a breach of duty in such an extraordinary manner." To which that functionary replied that "the pensions referred to were confined to certain classes of commissioned officers, and were held only so long as those officers continued in that rank to which the pension was annexed." And he addressed the letter to "Charles Napier, Esq."

To deprive a man who had served his Sovereign and country so long and with so much distinction of the reward of those services for a merely technical offence against the law was a sufficiently high-handed action; but to "esquire" the Commander-in-Chief of the Portuguese Navy was a piece of gratuitous impertinence, and well merited the rebuke which it called forth from the indignant officer:—

"H.F.M. Ship *Don John*, Lisbon,
"7th January 1834.

"SIR,—A letter has come to me, addressed 'Charles Napier, Esq.', giving their lordships' explanation why I have been deprived of my pension.

"I shall not dispute their lordships' decision, but I must express myself astonished that the Secretary of the Admiralty (for I can never suppose

it would be their lordships' intention) should take from me my rank and station in the Portuguese service, by addressing me in that style. I bear a commission as Admiral and Major-General of the Portuguese Navy, and am a Viscount of the Kingdom, and as such I should be addressed. I have the honour to be, your obedient servant,

"CHARLES NAPIER.

"To the Honourable George Elliott,
"Secretary of the Admiralty."

During the winter, the war languished, neither party attempting any offensive movement of importance. Thanks to the vindictive policy pursued towards the supporters of Dom Miguel in Lisbon, the ill-advised arrest of Count Taipa, a nobleman who had written a strong letter to Dom Pedro on the subject of the tobacco monopoly—an action which had greatly irritated his brother-peers—and other blunders on the part of the Government, the Queen's cause was sensibly losing ground in the capital. Napier, whom, on his arrival in Lisbon, the Emperor had requested to speak his mind to him, took advantage of this permission to do so very freely indeed, and informed His Majesty, *inter alia*, that "there was much discontent, that he was losing his popularity, that there would be a reaction, and that his Minister of Marine was a blockhead."* But his representations do not appear to have had much effect upon the Emperor, whom he describes as "a good man, but ill-advised and obstinate."†

With the approach of spring, the Admiral, weary of inaction, begged permission to make an attempt against the northern ports which were still in possession of the Miguelites. The Emperor and his Ministers were too occupied with drafting new laws and issuing decrees to have much time to spare for planning campaigns; but eventually they gave a reluctant consent, and on March 16 he sailed for Setubal in the steamer *City of Edinburgh*, with 120 British marines and 30 or 40 seamen, with the intention of embarking the Portuguese marines whom he had left in garrison at that place, and making an attempt to get possession of Figueras.

On the following day, he arrived at Setubal, and, as the weather did not appear sufficiently settled to permit of the enterprise against Figueras, asked permission, by secret telegraph, to surprise Alcacer do Sal, where the garrison was known to be weak and which was a position of some importance. To his

* Napier to Colonel Hodges, December 20th, 1833. † *Ibid.*

astonishment, the answer received was: "It is his Imperial Majesty's orders that the Admiral return immediately to Lisbon in the *City of Edinburgh*."

The Admiral, however, had not the smallest intention of returning until he had struck a blow somewhere, and accordingly rejoined:—

"My return will have a bad effect. I shall proceed to my destination.

All this," he writes, "may appear very wrong, and no doubt was, but, as I have said before, this war was unlike all others. So much intriguing and vacillation constantly at work, it was necessary for officers to take much on themselves, or give it up altogether."*

On the evening of the 18th, he left Setubal, and made an attempt to land at Figueras; but the high surf that was running rendered this impracticable. The whole coast of Portugal, from the Minho to the Tagus, is at all seasons of the year extremely difficult of approach, owing to the constant swell; but, after waiting three or four days, he determined to endeavour to surprise Caminha, which lies about three miles from the mouth of the river, near which was a fort standing on an island in mid-stream.

Landing at the small town of Guarda, on the Spanish side of the Minho, he reconnoitred the enemy's position from the top of a mountain, to which the Spanish authorities had obligingly guided him, and, after considerable difficulty, obtained their permission to march his troops through Spanish territory and across the river. Shortly after midnight on the 23rd, the seamen and marines were landed, and marched to the Minho, but, from want of boats, he was only able to send 300 men across the river. They were given discretionary power to take up a position and wait until the Admiral and the rest of the force joined them, or march on to Caminha. They chose the latter course, made their way into the town, through a sally-port that had been left open, and surprised the garrison in their beds, after securing the sentries. The governor was shot at his bedroom window by a marine, while in the act of calling his men to arms, and his was the only life lost.

Having captured the town, Napier summoned the fort in the middle of the river to capitulate, promising the commandant

* "The War in Portugal."

that, if he surrendered, he should be well received and be allowed to retain his rank in the Queen's service, otherwise the Admiral "would storm the fort and put him and his garrison to the sword." Whether the commandant really believed him capable of carrying this threat into effect we do not know; anyway, he made haste to capitulate.

After garrisoning Caminha with seamen and marines drawn from the vessels that were blockading Figueras, and sending to inform the officer commanding at Oporto, the Baron Pico de Celeiro—better known as "Old Torres"—of its capture, with a request that he would lose no time in sending a force northward to support and co-operate with him, the Admiral, in high feather at the prospect of realizing his long-cherished ambition of conducting a campaign ashore, set off in search of fresh triumphs.

"I beat to arms," he writes, "and marched on Fifo, leaving a garrison of one hundred men in Caminha, with orders to patrol on the Valença road and organize a force in the town. Here, then, I started, mounted on my charger, a wicked pony that had belonged to the governor, my staff on mules and donkeys, or whatever they could find, opening my first campaign at the head of five hundred Portuguese and English marines and sailors, as well pleased as the Duke of Wellington at the head of his army."

Advancing along the shore, while the guns of the *Dom Pedro* and the *City of Edinburgh*, which followed his movements, kept the enemy, who might otherwise have harassed his march, at a respectful distance, on March 28 he reached Vianna, a small port at the entrance of the Lima. Vianna possessed a strong citadel, which, had it been resolutely defended, might have given him a good deal of trouble. But the militia who occupied the town had no stomach for a fight, and marched out by one gate as the Admiral and his motley force entered by the other.

In the principal square of the town the Admiral halted his force, ordered the Constitutional hymn to be played and proclaimed the Constitution, after which he issued a proclamation to the inhabitants, adjuring them to live peaceably together and forget political animosities, and promising that no person should be persecuted for his political opinions.

At Vianna he received the welcome intelligence that on the

night of the 25th "Old Torres" had sent out a considerable force from Oporto, which, moving in three columns on San Thyrso, had attacked the enemy at Santa Christina, and driven them as far as Guimaraens. This diversion no doubt accounted for the fact that Napier had been able to advance thus far without meeting with any opposition.

The same evening, he received the submission of two small places, Espinosa and Villa-de-Conde, and next day he continued his march, with a force swollen by a considerable number of recruits, and occupied Ponte de Lima.

Encouraged by these successes, the Admiral resolved to fly at higher game, and to advance against Valença, a fortress of considerable strength, situated near the Minho, on the Spanish frontier. In anticipation that the place would not surrender without a siege, he sent orders to the captain of the *Dom Pedro*, who was cruising off Vianna, to return to Caminha and send up guns and mortars, and on March 30 left Ponte de Lima, with some 700 men, and on the following day arrived within sight of Valença.

As he approached the town, he took advantage of the nature of the ground to practise a little *ruse de guerre*. After marching his troops across an open space which overlooked the plain in which Valença stands, he caused them to file off out of sight to the right and left, and then to appear again on the scene, like so many additional troops following those who had already passed. Strange as it may appear, this time-worn device produced the effect desired.

Later the same day, he received a visit from Lord William Russell and Colonel Hare, who had put into Vigo on their way to England. Upon their inquiring how he proposed to take a fortress as strong as Valença, he replied: "Why, with this piece of paper, to be sure!"—at the same time producing a peremptory summons to the governor of the town to surrender, in which he informed that personage that "100 guns were on their way to batter down the walls, and that if he refused to capitulate, he should treat him and his garrison as rebels, take the place by assault and put the defenders to the sword." His two friends, however, after accompanying him to reconnoitre the town, expressed the opinion that it was too strong for the governor to allow himself to be "bluffed" into surrender; and their view of

the matter appeared to be confirmed when night came without bringing any reply to the Admiral's summons.

Next morning, he was reinforced by a detachment from Caminha and by a small body of Spaniards. The latter, however, would appear to have been sent merely with the idea of making the besieging force seem more imposing, as they were subsequently withdrawn. That day Napier again reconnoitred the fortress, and finding what looked like a weak spot in the defences, decided that, so soon as the guns arrived, he would try to effect a breach there and endeavour to carry the town by assault.

On April 2, he was joined by a militia regiment which had deserted from the town, and received a communication from one of the officers of the garrison, begging him not to make any attack before the following night, as, though the governor was bent on defending the place, his subordinates were not of the same mind, and it would certainly be delivered up.

On the following day, two of the heavy guns arrived; but before they were placed in position, a flag of truce was sent offering to surrender the town. The Admiral and his troops forthwith marched in, and "in half an hour were as comfortable as if they had been a fortnight in quarters."*

"My campaign is over," writes Napier to his wife, "and Valença, one of the strongest fortresses in Portugal, is in my possession. I had reconnoitred its defences, and found a soft place, which I determined to attack. Two of my guns had already arrived, when the governor capitulated. I will bring you the flags. I am now making all my arrangements to return and shall call at Oporto on my way. This is one of the finest countries I ever beheld. I have much enjoyed my campaign, and we have done wonders with a handful of sailors and marines.† We should have had hard work had they stood a siege, but I feel certain we should have succeeded. When I come back to Lisbon, I shall send the Minister of

* "The War in Portugal."

† The British portion of them was indeed a motley crowd. During the march from Ponte de Lima to Valença Napier tells us that he "collected the seamen and marines in a clump, and encouraged them in relating their adventures and the reasons that had brought them to Portugal. Some of their stories were amusing in the extreme. We had, as may be supposed, all sorts of characters, good and bad. There were broken-down shoemakers, tailors, drapers, men-milliners, poachers, disappointed lovers, several resurrection men; and it was even said there was a 'Burker' or two in the party. Most of them had entered voluntarily, but several had been kidnapped when drunk and shipped off without their consent. Nevertheless, they were generally very well behaved, and few instances of plundering or maltreating the inhabitants had occurred; but in all these cases the offenders were most severely punished."

Marine to the d——l; he has behaved extremely ill to me; the letter I wrote him will bring things to a crisis.* If there is any gratitude in Portugal, they will not forget our services."

On the same day on which Valença surrendered to the Admiral, "Old Torres," following up his success of March 25, obliged the enemy to fall back on Amarante and drove them across the Tamega; and thus, by the skilful co-operation of these two men, in ten days the whole of the country between the Minho and the Douro was reduced, the siege of Oporto raised, and the Miguelites cut off from one of the richest provinces of Portugal.

But to Napier belongs the credit of initiating this really remarkable little campaign, for, "afraid," as he says, "that, in the event of delay, what I wished to keep secret might leak out, and the enemy, in consequence, get wind of it," he did not communicate his project of the combined movement to the governor of Oporto until, by the capture of Caminha, he had obtained a firm footing on the coast; and the daring and resource he displayed throughout the whole enterprise is deserving of the highest praise.

* A couple of days after the Admiral had left Lisbon, Majorchi, who had lately succeeded Freire as Minister of Marine, and was even more indolent and incapable than his predecessor, took upon himself to dismiss a certain Captain Cunha, whom Napier had appointed Acting-Inspector of the Arsenal. On learning of this, the Admiral, furious with indignation, wrote the Minister a stinging letter, accusing him of being in the hands of "a parcel of rascally intriguing clerks," and threatening that, if, on his return to Lisbon, "a most ample apology" was not immediately forthcoming, he would resign his post, in which event all his officers would do likewise.

CHAPTER XII

MORE "SOLDIERING"—CONCLUSION OF THE WAR—RETURN TO ENGLAND

ON April 6, the Admiral left Valença and proceeded to Caminha, to embark on board the *Dom Pedro*, and the following morning arrived at Oporto, where he received a great ovation.

"I was at the theatre the other evening," he writes to his wife. "The play did not begin till the Admiral arrived. A warrior came in and recorded all my deeds, and brought in a crown of laurel, which was cheered with the greatest enthusiasm; at the same moment, two little children came into the box, and, to my utter astonishment and dismay, clapped a naval crown on my head, which, of course, I took off. The whole house resounded with acclamations, the ladies all standing and waving their handkerchiefs. Various other verses were repeated, alluding to my exploits, all of which were applauded in the most vociferous manner, and I was obliged to bow all round a dozen times."*

The Emperor had at first been exceedingly angry at Napier's flat refusal to obey the orders that had been sent to him to return to Lisbon, declaring that the Admiral was making war on his own account. But the complete success of the unauthorized expedition to the north obliged him to overlook the insubordination, and, on its conclusion, he raised him to the dignity of a count and invested Mrs. Napier with the Order of Isabella. As for the Minister of Marine, he hastened to placate the fiery Admiral by dismissing the person whom he had appointed Acting-Inspector of the Arsenal, and reinstating Captain Cunha.

Napier was still very anxious to get possession of Figueras, and leaving Oporto with the *Dom Pedro* and other vessels, he again appeared off that port; but the violence of the surf rendered it hopeless to attempt a landing, and, after cruising

* Letter of April 12, 1833.

for some time off the mouth of the Mondego, he returned to Lisbon. Here he found matters in a very unsatisfactory state, and Marshal Saldanha so infuriated against the wretched intriguers who had gained the Emperor's confidence, and who, so long as they could remain in office and enjoy its emoluments, and enrich themselves with the confiscated property of the Miguelites, seemed only too willing to prolong the war, that he had only with great difficulty been prevented from throwing up his command.

Towards the end of April, however, a treaty was signed between Great Britain, France, Spain and Portugal, whereby Donna Maria's right to the throne of Portugal was formally acknowledged, and it was agreed to expel Don Carlos and Dom Miguel from the Peninsula; and the Ministers of Queen Isabella of Spain, indignant at the support which Dom Miguel had given to the Spanish pretender, at once resolved to send troops to Portugal.

At the beginning of May, the Admiral again sailed for Figueras with a strong force, though, owing to stormy weather, two or three days passed before he was able to anchor. Meanwhile, events elsewhere had obliged him to detach two frigates from his squadron, but this reduction of his force did not, fortunately, affect the issue, and he succeeded in getting possession of the town. Its capture came about in a somewhat singular manner.

During the night of May 7–8, Napier sent in boats to take soundings. One of them capsized, and all its crew were drowned, with the exception of one man, who succeeded in gaining the shore, where he was made prisoner. Questioned by the Miguelites as to the force which the Admiral had with him, the sailor gave such an account of it, that the garrison decided that resistance would be hopeless and abandoned the town. The following day Napier got his troops on shore, though not without considerable difficulty, and marched in in triumph.

The Admiral was well received at Figueras, and, after organizing the government of the place, made his preparations for his second campaign. On the 9th, he began his march, and proceeded by way of Monte Mor and Louriçal to Pombal, where he made his junction with a body of troops under Colonel Vasconcellos.

" I arrived here this morning," he writes to his wife, " and have joined the other troops. Terceira will be here to-morrow, and we shall secure Dom Miguel at Santarem. You have lost much by not coming with me; this country is more beautiful than anything you can think of. I wish you had seen it! I have had good quarters, and you could have ridden with me all the way. I shall not be long before I come to Lisbon; the game is up. Five thousand Spaniards are also marching on Santarem. I hope that Dom Miguel will not escape."

At Pombal the Admiral received instructions from the Duke of Terceira to march by Ourem on Torres Novas, so as to arrive at the latter place on the same day as the duke expected to reach Pruaha. On the 12th, he came in sight of Ourem, an old Moorish town, situated on a lofty hill, and garrisoned by nearly 1,000 men. The garrison did not appear at all inclined to surrender, for the moment Napier's force came within range of their artillery a sharp cannonade was opened upon them.

During the night, Colonel Vasconcellos received orders to join Terceira with his contingent, but, meanwhile, the Admiral had been reinforced by a Scottish battalion, under Colonel Shaw, and some Portuguese light infantry, and found himself at the head of about 1,400 men.

On the 14th he summoned the governor of Ourem to surrender, informing him of the treaty recently signed between Great Britain, France, Spain and Portugal, and concluding as follows:—

" If you uselessly defend the place and spill Portuguese blood, you will be held personally responsible. There is now no point of honour, because there is not the least possibility of being of service to Dom Miguel, who is lost for ever.

" I have with me the same men who took the fleet on the 5th of July; they are ready to receive you as friends, but you will find them devilish unpleasant enemies."

The governor having refused to capitulate, the Admiral and Colonel Shaw reconnoitred the place closely under cover of night, and next morning scaling-ladders were brought up, and the English and Portuguese marines advanced, as though with the intention of delivering an assault. The enemy apparently did not like the look of the men who took the fleet on the 5th of July, and considered that they might prove " devilish unpleasant enemies " to deal with, for they lost no time in sending out one of their number with a flag of truce, and an hour or two later Ourem had followed the example of Valença.

Thus, practically without loss of life, Napier had captured five different places, of which two were strong fortresses and two seaport towns, an achievement which, even allowing for the fact that their garrisons were very half-hearted in their support of the Miguelite cause, was one of which he had good reason to be proud.

Early in the morning of the 16th, after placing a garrison in Ourem, the Admiral marched away with the remainder of his force to join the Duke of Terceira, but, to his great disappointment, he arrived too late to take part in the Battle of Asseiceva —the only decisive action of the civil war—in which the duke completely defeated the Miguelites with considerable slaughter and the loss of all their artillery and ammunition. The cause of the usurper was now utterly hopeless, and on May 26, 1834, he surrendered, with the remnant of his forces, at Evora Monte, to which he had retreated after evacuating Santarem, and, by a convention signed at that place, abandoned his claim to the throne of Portugal, and, in consideration of a pension of sixty centos de reis (about £16,000), promised never again to set foot in the kingdom upon which his perfidy and ambition had brought so much misery.

"Thus," writes Napier, "finished the civil war in Portugal—a war undertaken by a handful of men against a large and well-disciplined army; a war undertaken by an ex-Emperor of Brazil to establish his daughter on the throne of Portugal, which had been usurped by her affianced husband and uncle; a war conducted by imbecile and intriguing Ministers, who hardly ever did one act that was not favourable to Miguel; and a war brought to a successful termination by a chain of events that could never have been calculated upon."*

He might have added that this successful termination was due in a very large measure to his own courage, resource and indefatigable energy. Had he been defeated in the action off Cape St. Vincent, it is difficult to see how the situation could have been saved, while the combined movement in the north which he initiated at the beginning of the spring, when the fate of Portugal was still trembling in the balance, definitely turned the scale in favour of the Queen's party. Great credit is also due to him for his successful blockade of the northern ports

* "The War in Portugal."

for so many months, a task of exceptional difficulty, when we consider the size of the squadron which he had at his disposal and the fact that some of his ships were in such a condition that they were scarcely able to keep the sea in bad weather; for his watchful protection of Setubal and Lagos, which would otherwise have undoubtedly fallen again into the enemy's hands; and for the manner in which he consistently impeded the movements of the Miguelite army on the Tagus. In fact, from first to last his conduct was wholly admirable.

With the conclusion of the war, Napier's work was done, but, being still hopeful of being allowed to carry out the reforms in the Navy which he had long contemplated, he decided to remain for a time in Portugal. On his return to Lisbon, however, he found that during his absence none of his recommendations had been carried out, and the indolence and procrastination of the Minister of Marine drove him to the point of distraction. As will be gathered from the following letter, this personage, a harmless, dreamy kind of man, who, the Admiral tells us, was about as fit to be Minister of Marine as he himself was to be Archbishop of Braga, sometimes did not even take the trouble to reply to the communications which he addressed to him :—

"June 7th, 1834.

"SIR,—As your Excellency has not thought proper to reply to my letter of the 24th of May or the 4th of June, I must ask a short plain question, to which I request an answer. Is your Excellency decided that the Portuguese Navy is to remain in its present state of disorder, or is it to be improved? My ulterior determination shall depend on your Excellency's reply, which I beg may be speedy, for I will not submit to my representations being treated with contempt. I have the honour to be, etc.,

"CAPE ST. VINCENT."

This epistle drew an immediate response from the Minister, pleading absence from Lisbon, the multiplicity of affairs which had been engaging his attention, and so forth, as an excuse for not having replied to the Admiral's former letters, to the contents of which, however, he appears to have paid not the least attention.

On June 10—the anniversary of the day on which he had hoisted his flag off Oporto—Napier, having obtained a few weeks' leave of absence, left Oporto, with his family, for England, in

the *Duchess of Braganza*. The object of his visit to England was a twofold one. He had received a pressing invitation from his political friends at Portsmouth to contest the borough again at the approaching General Election, and he wished to ascertain what prospect of success he would have if he accepted it, and he had been requested by the Portuguese Government to endeavour to obtain the restoration of certain ships-of-war which had been seized some years before by the French, in retaliation for the Miguelites having fired upon the French flag, and were now interned at Brest.

After a pleasant passage, the *Duchess of Braganza* reached Portsmouth, where Napier met with a most flattering reception. The Mayor and Corporation went out to the ship, presented him with an address of welcome and escorted him ashore, and on the jetty the crowd was so great and so anxious to catch a glimpse of the hero of the occasion, and, if possible, to shake him by the hand, that he was almost swept off his legs. With considerable difficulty he at length succeeded in freeing himself from the attention of his too enthusiastic admirers and in reaching the George Hotel, where for three days he was obliged to hold a sort of court, so many were the friends who wished to see him. By a singular coincidence, Don Carlos was lodging in a house opposite the hotel; but on the arrival of the man who had so largely contributed to ruin his fellow-pretender, he gave orders for the blinds of all the windows to be drawn down, and next day took his departure for London, with his family and suite.

Early in August, Napier returned to Lisbon, without, however, bringing with him the Portuguese ships seized by the French, negotiations for the restoration of which were still proceeding. Shortly after his arrival, Dom Pedro, whose health, undermined by the anxieties and fatigues he had suffered during the civil war, was now rapidly failing, resigned the Regency, and the young Queen was declared of age. A new Ministry was now formed, with the Duke of Palmella as President of the Council, and the Duke of Terceira as Minister for War. Napier immediately laid before the Government his scheme for the reorganization of the Portuguese Navy, intimating, at the same time, his intention of resigning should it not be accepted; but its consideration was interrupted by the death of Dom Pedro, who expired on September 24, 1834, leaving a name

which deserves all honour from Portuguese and Brazilians alike.

At the funeral of the ex-Emperor, whose death he sincerely regretted, the Admiral appeared as one of the three chief mourners, the other two being Terceira and Marshal Saldanha. A few days, later, he was informed that his plans for the reorganization of the Navy could not be accepted by the Government, upon which his resignation was immediately tendered and accepted.

"After what I said to you in my last letter," he writes to his wife, "you will not be surprised to hear that I have resigned. My proposals were not accepted for the amelioration of the service; and, indeed, it is lucky I have resigned, for in a short time they would, of themselves, have considered an Admiral useless here. . . . I feel a load off my mind, and shall be delighted when I get away. . . . I shall buy a place and rest quiet the remainder of my life."

On October 15, Napier hauled down his flag, on which occasion he received a letter from the young Queen, informing him that "he would preserve the honorary post of Admiral, in consideration of his distinguished valour, and the various services which had deserved her entire approbation and praise."*

Before leaving Portugal, Napier busied himself in procuring a settlement of the claims of the officers and men who had served under him, and, in what he felt a still deeper interest, the claims of the relatives of those who had fallen in the Queen's cause. He believed that he had satisfactorily arranged the matter, but, owing to want of funds, combined with the unbusinesslike methods of the Portuguese Government, a considerable time was

* On December 1, 1834, the Chamber of Peers, on the motion of Count Taipa, honoured him with a vote of thanks for his services. A copy of this resolution, written on parchment, and signed by the Peers, and with a gold seal attached, was sent him by the Duke of Palmella, President of the Chamber. It was as follows:—

"To his Excellency Count Cape St. Vincent,

"The Chamber of Peers of the Kingdom of Portugal unanimously resolve that a vote of thanks be given to Admiral Napier, Count Cape St. Vincent, for his brilliant conduct in the naval action of the 5th of July, 1833, in the waters off Cape St. Vincent, and for the services which he afterwards performed by sea and land, which greatly contributed to the establishment of her Most Faithful Majesty and the Constitutional Charter.

"The Chamber also resolve that to the illustrious and always-conquering Admiral their thanks be communicated in this form, as a perpetual testimony of their gratitude.

"Given in Lisbon, on the 1st of December, 1834.

"Signed by the Peers."

to elapse, and he was to be involved in much trouble and annoyance, before these claims were even partially settled.

On November 1 he took leave of the Queen and the widowed Empress, when the latter presented him with a lock of Dom Pedro's hair in a gold locket, and on the 4th he sailed for England.

CHAPTER XIII

"THE WAR IN PORTUGAL"—A LIVELY ELECTION CONTEST—VISIT TO LISBON

IN the letter to his wife announcing his resignation of the command of the Portuguese fleet, Napier had announced his intention of "buying a place and resting in quiet for the remainder of his life." But he was so far from persisting in this resolution, that scarcely had he returned to England than he found himself involved in the turmoil of another political contest at Portsmouth, canvassing and addressing meetings with characteristic energy. His friends and supporters in that town were hopeful that, borne on the wave of the popular enthusiasm which his exploits in Portugal had caused, he would succeed in winning one of the seats. But the Bonham-Carter influence again proved too strong, and he was fated to find himself once more at the bottom of the poll.

The election over, he contemplated taking service again under a foreign flag, and espousing the cause of Queen Isabella of Spain against Don Carlos, a case nearly parallel to that of Donna Maria and Dom Miguel, for in Spain, as in Portugal, the struggle was one of freedom and liberal institutions against absolutism and bigotry. His old friend Colonel Evans was to take command of the British legion, and was very anxious for Napier to hoist his flag at the same time. But "circumstances over which he had no control prevented him from joining the expedition,"* and the early months of 1835 were passed in no more exciting occupation than an unpleasant correspondence with the Minister of Finance at Lisbon, relative to the settlement of his own claims on the Portuguese Government, and those of the officers and men who had served under him. At the same time, he found

* General Elers Napier: "Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.," vol. I., p. 306.

himself threatened with a prosecution by the owners of the steamer *Lord of the Isles*, which, it will be remembered, had brought Captain Elliott, Dom Miguel's "Naval Adviser," to Portugal and had been captured by Donna Maria's fleet. The owners questioned the legality of the seizure, and had they taken the case into court, the consequences to Napier might have been very serious.

In the course of that year he began his "Account of the War in Portugal," which occupied a considerable portion of his time. It was a difficult undertaking, as the sources from which he had to collect materials were distant and uncertain; and some of his Portuguese friends to whom he wrote for information were very dilatory in their replies, or did not reply at all. It would also appear, from a letter which he received after the publication of the book from the Duke of Terceira, that copies of certain official documents which he had required to complete his work had not been sent him.

The book was published in the following year, and a copy sent to William Napier, his cousin, drew from the historian of the Peninsular War the following letter:—

"My dear Charles,—I have read your book, and I now think you an abler fellow than I thought you were before; and I did not think 'small beer' of you then. Your land campaigns are quite equal to your sea fights in conception, and would have been so, in the eyes of the world, if you had been left to fight a battle for yourself; but I suppose you now know that war is more difficult and uncertain on shore than at sea. I have no time to review anything; but the book will sell, and be well received, depend upon it."

And Colonel Charles Napier wrote:—

"As to your book, it delighted me; but at first I thought it would have been better had you given it to William to write, because he could have given more just praise to you than you do yourself. But I have now quite changed my opinion, and I am satisfied that your plan of writing it yourself was the best. It stamps your book with an authority and originality that no other man could give it, and whoever may write the history of that war in future, still your book must ever remain the 'text-book.' Your works *ashore* appear to me to have been done with as much ability as your works *at sea*, and were much more difficult."

The "Account of the War in Portugal" is undoubtedly an interesting and valuable work, though marred here and there by

inaccuracies, for which, however, the author ought not to be held too strictly to account, since, as we have seen, it was written under considerable disadvantages. It appears to have been favourably received by the Press, though the general opinion was that "the author had come too late into the field,"* and that, "so far as the public was concerned, the subject was exhausted."† For which reason the *Athenæum* dismissed it in half a dozen lines, while the *Quarterly* and the *Edinburgh* do not seem to have noticed it at all; and it is hardly probable that the sale was a large one.

The late Sir J. K. Laughton, in his article on Napier in the "Dictionary of National Biography," says that, on his return from Portugal, he had only to report himself at the Admiralty for his name to be restored to the Navy List. This statement is so far from being correct, that notwithstanding all his efforts and those of his friends, several months elapsed before he was reinstated, and it was not until the middle of March, 1836 that he had the gratification of receiving the following letter :—

"Admiralty, March 16, 1836.

"SIR,—His Majesty having been graciously pleased, by his Order in Council of the 9th March, to direct that your name shall be replaced on the list of captains of the Royal Navy, with your original seniority, and that your half-pay shall commence from the date of the said Order in Council, I have received their lordships' commands to acquaint you that you have been reinstated in your former rank, and that your name has been placed on the half-pay list from the 9th inst. I am, etc.,

"C. WOOD.

"Captain Charles Napier, C.B."

At the end of 1835 Napier had purchased a small estate, situated near Catherington, and generally known as "Quallett's Grove," and sometimes as "Cherry Grove" (from having originally belonged to the father of Colonel Cherry, who married Napier's eldest step-daughter); but upon which its new owner, for the sake of ancestral associations, conferred the appellation of "Merchistoun Hall."

Many years before, we are told, when living in poverty and retirement at Rowland's Castle, he had often visited the "Grove," and, having an impression that it would one day be his, had planned various improvements in the property. These improve-

* *Athenæum.* *Gentleman's Magazine.*

ments he now proceeded to carry out, and for a time he seems to have been very contented in his new home, "living at once," according to the anonymous author of a biography of him which appeared in 1841,* "like a prince, an admiral and an old English country gentleman, and occasionally driving his 'four-in-hand' with all the spirit of former days." But, after a time, country pursuits began to pall, for his heart was always with his profession, and he was anxious for active employment, or, failing that, to obtain a seat in Parliament, that he might be enabled to expose the abuses which were crippling the efficiency of the Service, and bring about the reforms which he was so eager to see introduced. Pending the realization of his Parliamentary ambitions, he continued to call attention to the need for naval reform through the medium of the Press, and wrote a number of papers, particularly on "Impressment"—which he regarded as an un-English and tyrannical custom—and "Manning the Navy." Some of these letters were published in various journals, while others will be found in his "State of the Navy."

In the summer of 1836, Napier paid a visit to Scotland, and the scenes of his youth. He found his old home in an even more dilapidated condition than on the occasion of his former visit, but was pleased to find some of his father's old servants still alive. Among them was his faithful nurse, Mary Miller, for the comfort of whose declining years he provided by the purchase of a small annuity.

Ever since his return from Portugal, Napier had been endeavouring to secure the promotion of his younger step-son, Charles Elers Napier, the gallant youth who had fought so heroically in the memorable action off Cape St. Vincent, but his efforts had not been attended with success. He was bitterly mortified at the way his repeated applications for his son's promotion and for his own employment were treated by the Admiralty, and at the beginning of 1837 we find him addressing a long and exceedingly outspoken letter to Lord Minto, the then First Lord, in which he attributes the neglect of which he complains to his lack of political influence and to "obstacles in a certain quarter." To this letter Lord Minto, who had previously refused him a personal interview, does not appear to have sent any reply.

In July of that year, Napier made a third attempt to enter

* "The Life and Exploits of Commodore Napier." London, 1841.

Parliament, by coming forward in the Liberal interest for Greenwich, against Mr. Barnard and Mr. Wolverly Attwood, the chairman of the General Steam Navigation Company. In "The Life and Exploits of Commodore Napier" we find the following amusing account of the proceedings at the hustings, which appear to have been of an unusually lively character, even for those times:

"From the first, there was never any doubt as to the return of Mr. Barnard, and the contest was, in fact, between the gallant captain, in the Liberal interest, and Mr. Attwood, the new Conservative candidate. At the nomination a scene of most tremendous uproar and confusion took place. A large party of persons employed by the General Steam Navigation Company crowded round the hustings, and by their vociferations and shouts prevented anybody but their candidate from being heard. Captain Napier, when he presently appeared, endured the storm with great good-humour and patience. His pithy and characteristic declaration of principle were audible to the friends immediately surrounding him; but even this was too great a privilege to be enjoyed, for first came a lump of mud, and then a sort of independent firing of stones, till at length a general volley was given, which cleared the hustings.

"On the second day, Captain Napier, who was not going to allow his Conservative opponent to have it all his own way, brought over from the *Medea* steam-frigate a party of seventy or eighty seamen, under the boatswain, who soon procured for the gallant captain a fair field in his favour. One of these Jack Tars seated himself on the top of the penthouse which covered the hustings, waving one of the colours taken from Dom Miguel's fleet in the action off Cape St. Vincent. Three sturdy bargemen climbed up the supporters, for the purpose of dislodging this venturesome Napierite. The first that came within Jack's reach went to the ground much sooner than he came up; the next shared the same fate; and the third, retreating, left our sailor in undisputed possession of his elevated position. This little incident, as may be supposed, excited much amusement, and was considered an omen of the gallant officer's success. On the third day, however, Mr. Attwood having a considerable majority, Captain Napier resigned.

"On the occasion of the election, Captain Napier appeared in an old blue frock-coat, with brass navy buttons; duck trousers, not rivalling the sun in whiteness; shoes patched, but very easy; and white socks, carefully, if not comfortably, darned; on his left breast dangled a profusion of orders blazing in their brilliancy, which served only to render more striking the *tout ensemble* of seediness which this true 'British Tar' presented to the admiring crowd of the beauty and fashion of Greenwich and Deptford. The whole was crowned by a round hat of most *manageable* brim, of a colour which can only be adequately described in the language of the Latin poet:

"'*Qui color albus erat, nunc est contrarius albo.*'

And there stood, pelted by the bargemen of Greenwich, the man on whose cool head, ready hand and unflinching heart had depended the destinies of a nation; one who had gained more victories and made more captures, with less loss of life, than any man had ever done before: a man quick to plan, prompt to execute—whose very rashness was a carefulness of consequences, and who, when he struck a blow, always weighed how much depended upon that blow being at once decisive."

The money and time expended by Napier on this unsuccessful election proved to be a good investment, since the Government, though they had had no compunction in ignoring the application for employment of the victor of Cape St. Vincent and one of the most distinguished officers in the Navy List, felt that they could not remain indifferent to the claims of a supporter who had fought a hopeless seat on their behalf; and the election was followed almost immediately by the offer of a ship.

"I have been offered the *Hercules*, which I declined," writes the defeated candidate to his wife, "and desired Parker* to tell Lord Minto that I wanted Charley to be made, in preference to giving me anything at present. Lord Minto is gone to Scotland, and I think Charley will be made when he comes back. There are several vacancies. This [the Greenwich election] has cost me £300, but it has given me a great claim on the Government, much more than all my victories in Portugal. Such is self! . . ."†

Towards the end of August, Napier, finding that the only chance of satisfactorily adjusting his own claims and those of the officers and men who had served under him in Portugal was to pay a personal visit to that country, left England for Lisbon. This, however, was not his only object in returning to the scene of his former triumphs. Since his departure from Portugal, that unfortunate country had once more become the prey of contending factions, amidst the struggle of which the hardly-won throne of Maria II. was already beginning to totter; and he hoped that his friendship with so many prominent men in Lisbon might do something to improve the situation.

In January, 1835, the young Queen had married Augustus, Duke of Leuchtenberg, second son of Eugène de Beauharnais, by his wife Augusta of Bavaria, but this prince died three months later, and, as it was of the utmost importance to have an heir to the Crown, the widow at the beginning of 1836 took a second

* Admiral Sir William Parker. † Letter of July 28, 1837.

husband, in the person of Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, a nephew of Leopold, King of the Belgians. Her Majesty's German consort was not popular with the Portuguese, and his nomination to the post of Commander-in-Chief was bitterly resented. In the following September, Fernando Soares da Caldeira headed a "*pronunciamento*" for the establishment of the Constitution of 1822, which resulted in the downfall of the Ministry of Palmella, Terceira and Saldanha, and the establishment of a new government under the Viscount Sá de Bendeira. The fallen Ministers attempted a counter-revolution, and, on this being frustrated, Terceira and Saldanha had recourse to arms, the civil war which followed being known as the "War of the Marshals," from the rank held by the two leaders of the malcontents. This struggle was still in progress when Napier arrived at Lisbon.

As a friend of the two insurrectionist leaders, Napier found himself an object of suspicion to the "Septembrists," as the supporters of the new Government were called, and his position for some time was a decidedly unpleasant one. The Civil Governor of Lisbon even demanded of the Government that he should be expelled from the city; and, though this request was refused, all his movements were very closely watched, and there was so much hostility towards him, that he considered it inadvisable to go out at night or to visit the Arsenal, where, thanks to the severe discipline which he had formerly maintained, he knew that he had many enemies. He had, however, a satisfactory interview with the Minister, who promised that his claims and those of his step-son Charles and Pearn should be settled, but gave him to understand that there might be considerable difficulty in finding the money, "as there was hardly a shilling in the Treasury, and no person had been paid for a year."

In a letter to his wife, dated September 19, Napier gives an interesting account of the accouchement of the Queen of Portugal, which took place on the evening of the 17th :—

"The Queen," he writes, "was confined on Saturday evening, at half-past eleven, and I think I never saw such a scene before in my life. About eight in the morning all the Ministers and the people about the Court—men and women—were sent for, together with the Corps Diplomatique; it had more the appearance of a fête than an accouchement. There was breakfast prepared at about twelve.

"I did not go to the palace until four o'clock, intending to be there about the time the event was over, but I was mistaken, so I sat down and amused myself the best way I could—the gentlemen in one room, and the ladies in another. About eight o'clock we were all summoned into a drawing-room, next to the Queen's dressing-room, where was a splendid cradle; the next room to that was the Queen's bedroom, very elegant; and beyond that bedroom another room, where the Queen was, the door being open and the medical men in attendance. . . . At half-past eleven she presented the kingdom with a son and heir. We were then all ushered into the bedroom, about forty in number, where, lo and behold! seated in a chair was the Queen of Portugal, looking as if nothing had happened! We then all walked out, myself and two or three others kissing her hand. She conducted herself throughout like a Trojan. Everybody was delighted, and, for myself, I could not help shedding tears. About twelve we all sat down to a very excellent dinner that had been ready since seven, and we got home about one o'clock in the morning. Both Queen and the child—a very fair one certainly—are going on well. The town is pretty generally illuminated, but the country is in the same state; and, notwithstanding all my efforts and exertions, I have not been able to get the Ministers to bring about a suspension of arms, and the consequence is that, at the moment I am writing, the people who were before fighting against Dom Miguel are now cutting each other's throats."

Napier remained in Portugal until the end of October, by which time Saldanha and Terceira, having been completely defeated, had laid down their arms and agreed to leave Portugal. He felt great sympathy for his old friend Terceira, as brave a soldier as ever drew a sword and a devoted supporter of the throne, who had apparently been pushed into the revolt against his better judgment.

"Terceira came here in a steamer yesterday," he writes to his wife, "and sails to-day for England. The duchess goes with him; they have been on board the *Malabar*. I have dined with him two or three times. Poor fellow! he knew nothing of the movement of Saldanha till he joined them. He was persuaded, I suspect, by the people about the Court."*

Notwithstanding the suppression of the Chartist revolt, the country and the capital continued in a very troubled state, and the Republicans, elated by the defeat of their enemies, were becoming bolder every day. Napier advised the Government to put down the clubs and disarm the employees of the Arsenal—the centre of the Republican propaganda—who had formed

* Letter of October 10, 1837.

themselves into a battalion. But the feeble Ministers could not be persuaded to adopt any bold measures; and he was glad, therefore, to finish the business on which he had come and return to England, for he was aware that his life was by no means safe so long as he remained in Lisbon.

"The Arsenal people are so bad," he says, "that they would just as soon murder me as not. I have not been in it ever since I came here, nor would it be safe to go there."

Before leaving Lisbon he had the satisfaction of at last obtaining a settlement of the claims on the Portuguese Government which had so long remained unsatisfied. Even, however, after the bills on London had been drawn, some little time appears to have elapsed ere the Minister of Finance could find leisure to affix his signature to them, such is the Portuguese habit of procrastination.

"I was in great hopes to have come home in this packet," he writes on October 18, "but the eternal Portuguese word 'to-morrow' has prevented me. . . . The bills on London are all ready, but day after day passes without the signature of the Minister, which, however, he has faithfully promised he will affix to-day; this is not occasioned by any trickery, but by the eternal habit of putting off, which is not to be overcome, for no man can be on better terms than I am with the whole of them."

Napier brought with him to England, not only the bills, but two letters, one from the Queen of Portugal to Queen Victoria, the other from the King Consort, as the husband of Donna Maria was now called, to the Duchess of Kent, both asking for the promotion of Charles Elers Napier.

It might have been thought that, after this, the Admiralty would no longer have ignored the claims of the young officer; but such was not the case, as at the beginning of 1838 we find Napier complaining to Lord Minto, that his son, contrary to his advice, had solicited and received an appointment to a ship stationed on the Guinea coast, and was now going to an unhealthy climate, "to endeavour, by his own exertions, to obtain promotion, which, if gallantry entitled him to it, he had already nobly won."

At the end of January, the Admiralty did tardy justice to Napier by awarding him a good service pension; but the gratification which this would otherwise have occasioned him was discounted

by the fact that a very incomplete statement of the services he had rendered was given in the Naval Estimates. This, according to General Elers Napier, he considered, not only an injury to his professional character, but an insult to him as a reformer, implying that he was willing to accept a pension to which he was not entitled; and he lost no time in addressing a letter on the subject to the Board.

This letter was followed by a visit to London, where, after an unsatisfactory interview with Lord Minto, to whom "he gave his sentiments in the most decided manner," but who "declined to make him reparation," he, on the advice of his loyal friend, the Duke of Sussex, waited on the Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne. Melbourne received him very kindly, and, in his good-natured way, endeavoured to persuade him that it was all a mistake. But this the peppery sailor would not allow, and after writing a strong letter to the Admiralty, demanding either an audience of the Board or a correction of the Naval Estimates, went to see Lord Palmerston, "who was very civil, but said it was out of his department."

Finally, as the Admiralty continued to refuse him justice, and Lord Melbourne declined to interfere, he persuaded his friends in the House of Commons to bring the matter before the House during the discussion on the Naval Estimates, and we find him writing joyfully to his wife :—

"London, March 6th, 1838.

"I have gained a complete triumph, as you will see by the papers. Sir Charles Adam and Troubridge got up and said it was quite a mistake, and that my services stood higher than that of any officer in the Navy; William Gordon, however, would not let them off, and said they ought then to have stated them fully. Wemyss, Codrington, Captain Jones and Deans Dundas also spoke in my favour, so that, on the whole, I have come off with flying colours."

All this may seem to the lay reader very like a storm in a tea-cup; but it must be remembered that naval and military men have always been very tenacious in matters which concern their professional reputation, and Napier's action was generally approved by his brother-officers.

In the autumn of that year, while following the hounds in Hampshire, Napier had a severe fall, which resulted in the fracture of two of his ribs. He appears, however, to have put the

period of enforced idleness which followed to great purpose, by writing several long and very able letters to the newspapers, in which he called attention to the danger which threatened Europe from the policy of the Emperor Nicholas of Russia, and pointed out that increased efficiency in our Navy, which was at this time very imperfectly manned, was urgently required in order to oppose the Russian designs. He also had some correspondence with Lord Palmerston on the same subject, in which he advised that much greater inducements should be offered to seamen to persuade them to join and to remain in the Service, such as bounties, increased pay for petty officers, pensions after fourteen years' service, and situations in the dockyards as a reward for good services. " Men would then come forward, and we should be enabled to fit out a fleet before the spring, and at once come to a clear understanding with Russia. If peace can be preserved, a powerful armament is the best means of doing it. If not, the sooner we go to war the better."

CHAPTER XIV

THE SYRIAN EXPEDITION

IT will be remembered that after the Greenwich election in the summer of 1837, Napier had been offered the command of a ship, which he had declined, intimating that he wished his younger step-son, Charles Elers Napier, to be promoted, in preference to anything being given to himself. Nearly eighteen months passed before he had another chance of employment, though, as we have seen,. he certainly did not permit the Admiralty to forget his existence in the interim ; but at the end of December, 1838, he was appointed to the *Powerful*, which he commissioned at Sheerness on New Year's Day, 1839.

The *Powerful*, in which he was to play so distinguished a part during the Syrian Expedition of 1840–1841, was a fine two-decker, of 2,396 tons, carrying eighty-four guns, of which seventy-eight were 32-pounders and six 68-pounders. Built in 1826, she was considered an excellent ship of her class, combining every good quality that could be desired in a sailing vessel of that period. Her complement was 635 seamen, 60 boys and 150 marines. Her commander was Captain Liardet, and, by a special application from Napier, his old shipmate Pearn was appointed master.

In two months the *Powerful* was ready for sea, and on March 2 she left Sheerness and anchored off the Little Nore. On the 12th, orders came for her to proceed to Spithead, and, as she was still short of her full complement by some 200 men, on arriving there, Napier issued the following bill for circulation at Portsmouth :—

"Wanted, Active Seamen for the *Powerful*—Captain Napier. The *Powerful* is a fine ship, and, in the event of war, will be able to take her own part."

From Spithead the *Powerful* proceeded to Plymouth, and

thence to the Cove of Cork. Scarcely had she cast anchor, when steamers began to arrive, crowded with people anxious to see the man who had done such great things in Portugal, and for some days "the ship was like a fair: men, women and children —gentle and simple—frieze and fustian—poplin, silk and satin. As many were admitted as could be received; but frequently whole boatloads were obliged to wait until some of those already on board had left. . . . The band occasionally played, and dancing among the better classes took place on the poop, much to the enjoyment of the Irish lasses, who became our partners for the nonce, and the captain enjoyed and entered into the fun as much as any of us."*

The *Powerful* remained six weeks at Cork, during which time her officers and crew were most hospitably entertained, and then received orders to proceed to Dublin *en route* for the Clyde. But on the evening of June 29 these orders were suddenly countermanded by an Admiralty letter, directing Napier to proceed with all possible speed to Malta, to reinforce the Mediterranean fleet under Sir Robert Stopford. And the letter added that, though he had no charts of the Mediterranean on board, it was hoped that he would be able to make his way to Malta without them.

Napier immediately sent for Pearn, and inquired if he could take the ship out of Cove Harbour during the night, and, on the master replying in the affirmative, hammocks were piped up, the "Blue Peter" hoisted, and in an hour after the receipt of the order the *Powerful* would have been under sail, had not the capstan unfortunately broken whilst heaving the last anchor out of the ground. However, by 2 A.M. the next morning she was under weigh, and was soon speeding southwards with every stitch of canvas set. For with the letter announcing his change of destination, her commander had received another informing him that two other line-of-battle ships, the *Ganges*, of 84 guns, and the *Implacable*, of 74 guns, had already started for the Mediterranean, and he was anxious not to be the last upon what he foresaw might soon be the scene of very stirring events.

On July 5, the *Powerful* made the land on the coast of Portugal, to the north of Caminha; on the afternoon of the

* Letter of Captain Pearn, R.N., cited by General Elers Napier in "Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier," vol. I., p. 363.

9th, she passed the Rock of Lisbon; the same evening, she doubled Cape St. Vincent, very near the spot where six years before Napier had fought his brilliant action with the fleet of Dom Miguel, and on the 12th she arrived at Gibraltar.

Napier's elder step-son and future biographer, now a captain in the 46th Regiment, happened to be stationed at "Gib," and for him he obtained from the governor, Sir Alexander Woodford, a few weeks' leave of absence, to accompany him. The *Ganges* and *Implacable** had passed through the Straits on the 9th, and, as they had thus three full days' start of the *Powerful*, there appeared to be little chance of her overtaking them. But his ship sailed well, and he thought that, by a little seamanship and manœuvring, he might yet outstrip his competitors.

Accordingly, on leaving Malta on the 13th, the wind being very light, he kept close to the African shore, in order to have the advantage of the land and sea breezes, and made such good progress, that on the evening of the 24th, with band playing and carrying every stitch of canvas that could be crowded on her, the *Powerful* entered the harbour of Lavalette. Here Napier learned, to his great satisfaction, that the *Ganges* and *Implacable* had not yet arrived, though they made their appearance on the following morning, having been delayed by the bad sailing of the latter ship.

During the voyage from Gibraltar to Malta, General Elers Napier, who was making his first trip in a man-of-war, tells us that he was greatly struck by the wonderful discipline, order and regularity which prevailed on board the *Powerful*. Although a rigid disciplinarian, Napier, as we have remarked elsewhere, was invariably just, and no punishment was inflicted until the delinquent had been tried by the officers of the ship, witnesses being summoned to prove the charge and the prisoner being permitted to call whatever evidence he thought fit. In this, it may be observed, Napier was more than twenty years in advance of his time.

Although he held the opinion that, composed as the British Navy was at this period, corporal punishment could not be abolished without serious injury to the Service, he endeavoured as much as possible to substitute other penalties for that of the lash.

* The *Ganges* was commanded by Captain (afterwards Admiral Sir Barrington) Reynolds; the *Implacable* by Captain Hervey.

"His idea as to the severity and frequency of flogging," says his step-son, "was that, by being often beheld, it lost a great portion of its efficacy in point of warning and example; that human nature is so constituted that custom makes us familiar with, and indifferent to, the most appalling punishments; and that when seamen are thus familiarized to such spectacles, they in some measure lose their horror, more particularly as—when the infliction is endured with fortitude—it is sure to elicit the approbation of their shipmates, who never fail to applaud the sufferer who has borne his punishment like a 'man.'

"He justly thought that where ridicule, instead of sympathy, was excited by punishment, it was likely to be attended with much more beneficent results. One mode which I remember he adopted to effect this was to have the neck of the culprit encased in a large wooden collar—such as is often placed on pigs to prevent them from breaking through a fence—and make him in this ridiculous guise parade the quarter-deck for a certain number of hours, exposed to the jeers of his companions, who usually roasted him well when he was released from his uncomfortable and unseemly cravat."

In the belief that a European war was not far distant, he employed every means to get his ship into the highest state of discipline and fighting efficiency, and took the greatest pains in the exercise of her guns. With his usual eccentricity, he adopted a system of his own to exemplify what might happen in action, as men at the different guns were either wounded or killed. For this purpose, when at general quarters, each lieutenant was provided with a basket of wads, which he occasionally threw indiscriminately at the men who were working the guns; and every man, on being struck by a wad, was supposed to be killed or wounded, and thus incapacitated from returning to his post. Frequently, we are told, he would take part in the business himself, pelting the men right and left with great zest, and being very angry if, when he succeeded in hitting a man, the latter did not immediately drop. In which case, he would go up to the supposed casualty and say: "You are killed! Why the deuce don't you fall down?" When the "deceased" would soon be sprawling on the deck, much to the amusement of his shipmates.

But it is time to give a brief sketch of the state of affairs in the Levant, which had caused the *Powerful* and the other two British line-of-battle ships to be summoned in such hot haste to Malta.

In the first years of the nineteenth century there appeared in Egypt a remarkable adventurer called Mehemet Ali. Born

in 1769 at Kavala, a small seaport on the frontier of Thrace and Macedonia, of Albanian parentage, his youth was passed uneventfully enough in his native town, where he combined the occupations of a petty government official and a trader in tobacco. But in 1798 he became second-in-command of a regiment of bashi-bazouks, or irregular troops, recruited in the neighbourhood to serve against Napoleon. In the following year, he took part in the Battle of Aboukir, at which he was driven into the sea with the routed Turks, and rescued from drowning by the gig of the British admiral, Sir Sidney Smith. Returning to Egypt, in 1801, at the head of his regiment, he showed both courage and capacity, and distinguished himself in a cavalry charge at the Battle of Rahmanieh. In the troublous years that followed, Mehemet Ali, as the leader of a corps of Albanian veterans, was in an excellent position to derive advantage from the struggle for ascendancy between the Mamelukes and the representatives of the Porte. At first he threw in his lot with the former, but soon turned against them, and proclaimed his loyalty to the Sultan ; and, after the sheiks of Cairo, in the hope of putting an end to the intolerable anarchy which prevailed, had elected him Pasha, an imperial firman confirmed their choice.

Mehemet Ali was astute, energetic, clear-sighted, a wonderfully shrewd judge of men, utterly without scruple, and spurred on by a boundless ambition, which the situation in the East offered him every opportunity of gratifying. His power increased as that of the Ottoman Empire declined, and in 1811 his treacherous massacre of the Mamelukes at Cairo left him without a rival in Egypt ; while the foundations of his empire beyond were laid by the war against the Wahhabis and the conquest of the holy cities of Medina and Mecca. The Wahhabi War continued until 1818, when Ibrahim, the Pasha's adopted son, who in 1816 had driven the remnant of the Mamelukes into Nubia, brought it to a successful termination. This done, the Pasha turned his attention southwards to the vast country watered by the Upper Nile, conquered Kordofan, and opened a great trade in slaves with the interior of Africa. Meanwhile, he had begun to reorganize his army on something like European principles, had built a fleet and erected military workshops and arsenals. In 1824, he sent a strong force to assist the Sultan, Mahmoud II., to suppress the Greek revolt, but in 1827 his fleet was practically

destroyed at Navarino. In 1830, the Porte conferred upon him the post of Governor of Crete as a reward for his assistance. This, however, was far from satisfying his ambition, and he determined to take advantage of the weakness of Turkey to make further acquisitions. In 1831, he picked a quarrel with the Pasha of Acre, and dispatched an army under Ibrahim, which took Acre and overran Syria. Mahmoud II. sent a large force against the Egyptians, but on December 21, 1832, the Turks were completely defeated at Konieh, the ancient Iconium. Constantinople was now in danger; in fact, had Ibrahim advanced at once upon the city, it would probably have fallen an easy prey to his victorious army; and the Sultan, in great alarm, applied for aid to the European Powers. The Czar responded at once to the appeal, but Great Britain and France refused to sanction Russian intervention, and threatened to support the Egyptians; and Mahmoud was compelled to sign the humiliating Treaty of Kutaieh, which confirmed Mehemet Ali in his possession of Crete and ceded Syria to him as a fief of the Porte. Shortly afterwards, the Sultan, disgusted with the attitude of the Western Powers, concluded with the Czar the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi (July 5, 1833), and, in a secret article, agreed to close the Dardanelles to all but Russian vessels.

Mehemet Ali had triumphed, but he was well aware that he held the fruits of victory by a very precarious tenure, and that both his power and his life would be forfeited so soon as the Sultan should be strong enough to deprive him of them. As early as 1834 it seemed as though the struggle would be renewed, for the Syrians, finding the Egyptian rule even more intolerable than that of the Turk, rose in revolt, and it required all the persuasions of the Powers to prevent Mahmoud from hastening to the assistance of his "oppressed subjects."

The crisis, however, came four years later. In March 1838, the Egyptians were severely defeated by the revolted Arabs of the Hauran, and the Porte at once began making preparations for war. Mehemet Ali, on his side, had little reason for postponing the conflict. The work of Moltke and other German officers, who had been reorganizing the Turkish army, threatened to destroy his superiority in the field, and a commercial treaty which the Porte had recently concluded with Great Britain struck at the lucrative monopolies which supplied him with the

From an engraving.

MEHEMET ALI

[To face p. 154

THE CAPTURE OF SIDON,
June 26, 1840.

See p. 180.]

[*To face p. 357.*

sinews of war. Months of suspense followed, for the Powers, alarmed lest the peace of Europe should be disturbed, threatened to take action against whichever side should be the aggressor, and Mehemet Ali was too astute to make the first move. But, at last, towards the end of April 1839, Mahmoud II. could restrain his impatience no longer, and the Turkish army crossed the Euphrates. Two months later (June 23), the Turks were attacked and utterly routed by Ibrahim Pasha at Nezib, a village on that river.

On July 1, the old Sultan died, unconscious of the fatal news, leaving his throne to Abdul Medjid, a feeble and dissolute youth of seventeen, and, to add to the gravity of the situation, a fortnight later, Ahmed Pasha, the Admiral-in-Chief of the Ottoman Navy, sailed for Alexandria and surrendered his fleet to Mehemet Ali, on the pretext that the Sultan's advisers were sold to the Russians.

So far as the Turkish forces were concerned, Mehemet Ali was now absolute master of the situation; and the Grand Vizier, in the name of the new Sultan, wrote entreating him to put an end to the shedding of the blood of the faithful, and offering him a free pardon, the highest honours that his master could bestow, the hereditary pashalik of Egypt for himself, and Syria for Ibrahim on his father's death. These terms fell very far short of the Albanian's ambitions, for he aimed at nothing less than supplanting the House of Othman on the throne; but, in view of the attitude of the European Powers, he deemed it prudent to send a diplomatic reply and to wait upon events.

On July 27, the Ambassadors of Great Britain, France, Russia, Austria and Prussia presented to the Porte a joint Note, in which they declared that an agreement on the Eastern Question had been reached by the five Powers, and urged it "to suspend all definite decision made without their concurrence, pending the effect of their interest in its welfare." In point of fact, the statement that an agreement had been reached was a "terminological inexactitude" of the most pronounced kind, though justified by the necessity of showing a united front. For so jealous and suspicious were the Powers of one another, that they were agreed in little save the necessity for agreement. However, for the time being Great Britain and France decided to act together, through common opposition to the supposed

designs of Russia, who, they feared, might seize the occasion for an isolated intervention under the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, and a powerful French squadron was sent to the Levant. Such was the position of affairs when, on August 5, the *Powerful*, *Ganges* and *Implacable*, which had left Malta, under the orders of Napier, on the last day of July, joined the British and French fleets in Busseekah Bay, at the mouth of the Dardanelles.

The two fleets presented a magnificent spectacle. The British consisted of ten line-of-battle ships: the *Princess Charlotte*, of 104 guns, in which the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Robert Stopford, had hoisted his flag; the *Vanguard*, of 80 guns; the *Pembroke*, of 72 guns; the *Bellerophon*, of 80 guns; the *Asia*, of 84 guns; the *Rodney*, of 92 guns; the *Minden*, of 72 guns; the *Powerful*, of 84 guns; the *Ganges*, of 84 guns, and the *Implacable*, of 74 guns, together with five frigates and smaller vessels. The total armament was 925 guns, and the total complement over 7,500 men—a most imposing force at that period.

The French was composed of nine line-of-battle ships, including the huge *Montebello*, carrying 120 guns, and manned by a crew of 1,087 men; the *Hercule*, of 100 guns, commanded by Capitaine Forêt, a gallant officer against whom Napier had measured himself in former days; and the *Jéna*—which flew the flag of the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Lalande—and a brig. Its total armament was 740 guns, and the crews aggregated over 6,700 men.

Austria, who, now that the spectres of 1830 were laid, was gradually reverting to her old policy of opposition to Russia in the Near East, had also sent a squadron, consisting of six frigates and corvettes. It lay at Smyrna, ready to co-operate with the British and French, should circumstances require.

The French ships were much better manned than our vessels of the same number of guns. Thus, the *Jéna* had 810 men against the 695 of the *Powerful*, *Asia* and *Ganges*, and each of the French "seventy-fours," 700 men against the 590 of the *Implacable*. This undermanning of our ships, in comparison with those of foreign navies, was a matter to which Napier had already endeavoured to draw attention through the medium of the Press, and which, when he entered the House of Commons, he frequently descanted upon.

The combined fleets remained until the end of October at Busseekah Bay, when the British proceeded to Vourla Bay, to the south of Smyrna, for the winter, and were shortly afterwards followed by the French squadron, part of which went to Smyrna. The British now consisted of twelve sail-of-the-line, the French of nine. In his "War in Syria" Napier remarks that Admiral Lalande was indefatigable in exercising his ships, and that in harbour manœuvres they were equally as good as our own, and in some respects superior, and expresses the opinion that the keeping of the two fleets so much together was a most impolitic measure.

Life at Vourla Bay was very monotonous, so much so, indeed, that, as will be gathered from the following letter to his wife, Napier seems to have had some thought of giving up his ship and returning home :—

"Vourla Bay, November 5, 1839.

"I very seldom go on shore; and, indeed, there is no great comfort in being employed in this way. I would much sooner live in a garret on bread and cheese than be here; and nothing prevents me from exchanging or giving up the ship but the uncertainty of what may take place with this fleet, which is now increased to twelve sail-of-the-line. We have been here a fortnight, and I presume are here for the winter; and if something does not take place, or seem likely to take place, I shall exchange in the spring."

The winter passed in the same inactivity, and Napier grew daily more impatient.

"Had I been in England," he writes to his wife on New Year's Day, 1840, "I should have had no difficulty in getting returned for either Falmouth or Plymouth. A campaign in the House of Commons would have done me more service than three or four years in Vourla Bay doing nothing."

And to his friend Colonel Hodges, recently appointed Consul-General at Alexandria, he writes :—

"We have been lying here, as I suppose you are aware by this time, since the latter end of October, but for what purpose you, as a diplomatist, may perhaps know; but we, as sailors, have not the least idea. Our wise Government seems desirous of protecting the Turks from Mehemet Ali, while we, on the contrary, think the danger much more likely to proceed from Russia. I am of opinion that the wisest thing we could do

would be the acknowledging Mehemet Ali, and giving him both Syria and Egypt; you would thus give the Turks a powerful ally, instead of a discontented Pasha, and it would be a much better way of keeping Russia in check than the present."*

A few days later we find him inditing a long letter to Lord Palmerston, in which, after pointing out the danger of the British squadron being manned on the peace establishment, while the French was on the war, he proceeds to give his views on the political situation :—

"Your lordship is better aware than I can be of the affairs of the East, but I think I could furnish you with the means of bringing them to a speedy conclusion at much less expense than we are now at. The French have here six sail-of-the-line; we have twelve. We ought to be at Constantinople. The question is how are we to get there without bloodshed, and without the knowledge of Russia? To ask permission of the Turks would be useless, for the Russian Ambassador would know it five minutes afterwards; and, if granted, the Russian fleet, crammed with troops, would be there before us; the wind is almost always fair for them and foul for us.

"If the French and English Governments agree, and your lordship could depend upon secrecy, the matter would be easy; but that, I suppose, cannot be counted upon; what I propose should therefore be without their knowledge."

He then proposes that the number of marines in the fleet should be raised to 2,000, and additional steamboats provided to convey them; that, with the first strong southerly wind that set in, Sir Robert Stopford should arrange that a steamboat should arrive from Constantinople; that he should then inform the French Admiral that he had received certain information that the Russians intended to occupy Constantinople, and that he had determined to forestall them, and to proceed thither on his own responsibility :—

"The steamers should start for the Gulf of Sadror, land the marines, march in the rear of the Dardanelles' batteries, and surprise them, which could easily be done; the fleet could then pass up without loss and announce their own arrival at Constantinople. There is no doubt but the French Admiral would fall into the trap and join, but I much doubt whether he would, if he knew the secret; and with the secret I certainly would not trust him beforehand. Once at Constantinople, an explanation would be given to the Government; and, as a proof of our sincerity, the marines might be re-embarked. The Russian Ambassador would storm and probably embark; let him go—Constantinople would be safe."

* Letter of January 12, 1840.

In the only too probable event of trouble with Russia following the execution of this Machiavellian scheme, the writer is of opinion that the British squadron in the East, even without the assistance of the French, would be quite strong enough to hold the Russian Black Sea fleet in check, and suggests that in the spring a powerful squadron should be sent to the Baltic :—

"Give Russia the choice of war or disarming; it is more than the Emperor's head is worth to choose the former; however, if he did, he must take the consequence; to that it will come at last, and to Constantinople he will get, sooner or later, unless we play a vigorous game. I remember well your lordship telling me, at the South Hampshire election, that no Ministry could keep peace with Russia for three years; your lordship has done it for four, but I do not think you can do it much longer.

"Could Russia see us embroiled with the French, they would then most certainly play her game with the Turks. Now is the time to make use of France to stop Russia and throw her back; that done, we should be ready to bring the French to their senses, which they seem to be beginning to lose. . . . All that Russia wants is time, and to see us embroiled with the French; they will then pounce on Turkey.

"Your lordship will excuse this long letter—if it be troublesome to read, you have only to put it in the fire; but I could not resist expressing to your lordship my views of the affairs in this part of the world, and, if agreeable, I shall be happy to repeat the subject occasionally."

We have not Palmerston's reply to this letter, which is interesting, if only as showing the writer's conviction that a collision with Russia on the Eastern Question must come sooner or later, and that Great Britain might as well precipitate the inevitable struggle, if she saw a favourable opportunity, as allow the Czar to choose his own time. But the plan he now proposed was far too bold to commend itself to the British Government, and he appears to have done Russia an injustice in supposing that she had any intention of occupying Constantinople at this moment, unless obliged to do so by the advance of the Egyptian Army. Indeed, the Czar had already intimated to Palmerston, through Baron Brünnow, that he was prepared to accept the views of Great Britain on the Turco-Egyptian question; to allow the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi to lapse; to act henceforth towards the Ottoman Empire only in concert with the other Powers, in return for an agreement closing the Dardanelles to the warships of all nations, and to extend the same principle to the Bosphorus.

Towards the end of January, Commodore Hyde Parker, second-in-command of the British squadron in the Mediterranean, sailed for England; and Sir Robert Stopford shortly afterwards obtained leave to proceed to Malta, with six sail-of-the-line. Napier, as the next senior officer, expected to be left in command of the rest of the squadron; but, to his intense disgust, he learned that Sir John Lewis, the superintendent of Malta dock-yard, was to succeed Stopford. So angry was he at this supposed affront, that he "instantly wrote to the Admiral to resign the command of the *Powerful*, which brought an explanation from him, viz., that he had written to the Admiralty to ask for Lewis to be allowed to relieve him, which the Admiralty consented to, and that there could be no intention of offending me on their part."*

This explanation induced him to withdraw his resignation, but whether because he was only partially mollified, or, more probably, because he was pining for active employment, we find him writing the following characteristic note to Lord Minto, to apply for the command of the British squadron in the Far East, which had recently fallen vacant by the death of Sir Frederick Maitland:—

"*Powerful*, Vourla Bay,
"February 9, 1840.

"My Lord,—I have just heard of the death of Sir Frederick Maitland, in India. If your lordship wants a man to go overland, at a moment's warning, to take command of the squadron, I am ready. I should hope to send all the China junks to the devil, before you can get a new Admiral out on the station. I am, your lordship's obedient Servant,

"Charles Napier.

"To the Right Honourable the Earl of Minto,
"First Lord of the Admiralty."

To this application Lord Minto replied, rather curtly, that the post in question had already been filled, so Napier had perforce to remain where he was, and, as events turned out, it was fortunate for him that he did so.

At the end of March, the two squadrons were ordered to Smyrna. After the dull monotony of Vourla Bay, this was a most agreeable change, for here he was able to enjoy a little society, and to go for long rides through a beautiful country.

* Letter to Mrs. Napier, January 29, 1840.

That he had not quite forgotten his horsemanship of former days is proved by the following letter from a brother officer:

"Riding is the greatest amusement among us, and we have actually had some very good races and a steeplechase or two. At our races a few days ago we had a good show of about fifty horsemen—with a few exceptions, naval officers—and capital sport; a dinner in a tent on the ground, at which we expected some English ladies, but were disappointed—a donkey race rode by our servants, and a break-neck gallop home in the evening filled up the day. Captain Napier, who is a bit of a fox-hunter, rode his own horse, and won a race in pretty style. He has taken a house at a sweet little village near our race-ground, about four miles out of town, and rides in frequently, comes on board to see all right, and goes out again."

On June 4, the British squadron left Smyrna for a summer cruise, and after visiting Scio, celebrated for the horrible massacre of its inhabitants by the Turks during the War of Independence, Mytilene and Mosconsi, towards the end of the month anchored once more in Busseekah Bay. Here a steamer arrived with intelligence that the mountaineers of the Lebanon had risen in arms against the oppressive government of the Egyptians, and that Mehemet Ali had despatched from Alexandria a squadron of Egyptian and Turkish ships,* with some 12,000 to 15,000 troops on board, for the purpose of putting down the revolt.†

On receipt of this information, Sir John Lewis at once returned to Smyrna with the squadron, whence he shortly afterwards detached the *Powerful*, another line-of-battle ship, the *Edinburgh*, a frigate and a steamer, under Napier's orders, to Beyrout. He arrived on July 7, to find that the Egyptian troops had been disembarked, and that the greater part of their fleet had sailed again, though there still remained a sixty-gun frigate, flying the flag of a rear-admiral, three corvettes and a brigantine. Upon these vessels Napier must have felt a sore temptation to pounce. But his hands were tied by his orders, which were merely to

* The Turkish ships were part of the fleet which had been conveyed to Alexandria and surrendered to Mehemet Ali by the Ottoman admiral-in-chief in July, 1839.

† Of this force some 4,000 were Turks, the remainder Albanians and Egyptians. Thus, the Sultan's ships were being employed to fight the Sultan's subjects, who were fighting to shake off the yoke of Mehemet Ali and to return to their former master.

ascertain and report upon what was going forward, and to avoid any act of provocation.

From the British consul at Beyrout, who came on board soon after he cast anchor, Napier learned that the magnitude of the insurrection in the Lebanon had been much exaggerated, as the mountaineers were but scantily provided with arms and ammunition, and were not headed by any chief of note, and that, with the additional Egyptian force recently landed, it would, in all probability, be speedily quelled. Next morning, he was informed that several villages and convents had been destroyed by the ferocious Albanian mercenaries of Mehemet Ali, and from the *Powerful* he saw columns of smoke ascending from the heights of Brumanah.

Upon this he sent a strong letter to the Egyptian admiral, protesting against such outrages, which he begged might be communicated to the commander of the troops. This appears to have been not without effect, for Souleyman Pasha, who commanded the garrison at Beyrout, sent a very courteous reply, and Napier heard of no further destruction. This Souleyman Pasha, it may be mentioned, was a Frenchman named Sève, who had formerly served with some distinction under Napoleon, and to whom was chiefly due the credit of having brought Mehemet Ali's army to its high state of efficiency. He was a kindly and chivalrous man, but the Albanian troops were very difficult to keep in hand, and their officers had little control over them.

A few days later, Mr. Wood, the dragoman of the British Embassy at Constantinople, arrived at Beyrout, with instructions from Lord Ponsonby, our Ambassador to the Porte, to foment an insurrection in Syria, and orders from Sir Robert Stopford to Napier to facilitate his mission.

"Mr. Wood was sent here by Lord Ponsonby," writes Napier, "and he came off a few days ago, bringing petitions from the poor mountaineers to the Sultan and the French and English Ambassadors. He landed again early this morning, and brings off news that the insurgents are divided amongst themselves; have been abandoned by many of their chiefs; are badly armed, and, by all I can collect, unless they are succoured with arms and ammunition, the insurrection will be put down very shortly; and then will finish all hope of Syria being released by the efforts of the inhabitants themselves, and the question will become more complicated than ever."*

* Letter to Colonel Hodges, July 15, 1840.

The question was already complicated enough; so much so, indeed, that a European war appeared imminent. For months past diplomatic *pourparlers* between the Powers had been proceeding without an agreement being reached, the obstacle to the desired arrangement being the attitude of France. In France Mehemet Ali had become a popular hero; under his rule French civilization had gained a footing in Egypt; he was regarded as invincible; and it was hoped that, in alliance with him, French influence in the Mediterranean would be supreme. In consequence, the French Government insisted on Mehemet Ali receiving the hereditary pashalik of Syria, as well as that of Egypt, a proposition to which Palmerston, though sincerely anxious to preserve the Anglo-French *entente*, refused to agree. The tension of the situation was increased, when, at the end of February, 1840, Thiers came into power. The diplomacy of Guizot, the French Ambassador in London, backed now by Austria and Prussia, was successful in persuading Palmerston to concede the principle of allowing Mehemet Ali to receive, besides Egypt, the pashalik of Acre, so far as the frontier of Tripoli and Damascus. But Thiers refused to listen to any suggestion for depriving him of any part of Syria. Instead, however, of breaking off the correspondence and leaving the concert, he continued to negotiate; and before long circumstances came to the knowledge of the British Government which seemed to prove that he was merely doing so with the object of gaining time, in order to mediate between the Porte and Mehemet Ali and secure a separate settlement in accordance with French views.

The discovery of what seemed an underhand intrigue on the part of the French Government was regarded by the Powers as an attempt to ruin the work of the concert and to secure for France a "complete individual triumph" at Alexandria and Constantinople; and their counterstroke was to sign at London, on July 15, 1840, without the concurrence of France, a convention with the Porte for the settlement of the affairs of the Levant. By this convention it was agreed that, the terms to be offered to Mehemet Ali having been concerted with the Porte, the signatory Powers would unite their forces in order to compel the Pasha to accept the settlement. In the event of Mehemet Ali yielding within ten days after this ultimatum had been presented to him, he was to receive the hereditary pashalik of

Egypt and the administration for life of southern Syria, with the title of Pasha of Acre and the possession for life of St. Jean d'Acre. On the expiration of the ten days, should he remain obstinate, the offer of Syria and Acre would be withdrawn ; and if at the end of another ten days he was still defiant, the Sultan would hold himself at liberty to withdraw the whole offer, and to take such measures as his own interests and the advice of the Allies might suggest to him.

This treaty excited the most extreme indignation in Paris, where it was regarded as a " mortal affront " to the honour of France. The whole Press was clamorous for war ; Thiers declared that the *entente* with Great Britain was shattered and ostentatiously pushed on warlike preparations ; and even the cautious Louis Philippe appeared to be carried away by the prevailing excitement. It may be doubted whether the French Government, despite the bellicose declarations of its chief, ever seriously contemplated a recourse to arms on behalf of Mehemet Ali ; but its attitude undoubtedly contributed to strengthen that personage in his determination to resist the demands of the Powers.

On July 16, Napier, who appears to have thus early contemplated the possibility of a landing on this part of the coast, and a subsequent campaign in the mountains, despatched Pearn, the Master of the *Powerful*, on a reconnoitring expedition to the mouth of the Nahr-el-Kelb, or Dog River, at the entrance of St. George's Bay, under the pretext of watering. This able and enterprising officer, who was accompanied by Lieutenant Bradley, of the same vessel, accomplished the mission entrusted to him in the most satisfactory manner, and, after landing and reconnoitring the ground about D'jounie, penetrated into the mountains and visited a convent, where he made the acquaintance of Padre Rhyllo, the Superior of the Jesuit establishment at Beckfaiä. This Padre Rhyllo possessed great influence with the mountaineers, and afterwards did good service in the Ottoman cause.

On the 18th, the *Powerful* proceeded along the coast as far as Tripoli, where Napier learned that the mountaineers in that district had been awed into subjection and had laid down their arms. He therefore returned to Beyrout, whence he wrote to Palmerston that the revolt had been put down. And he adds :

"The force of the insurgents, I find, was very much exaggerated; nevertheless, had not Mehemet Ali acted with such extraordinary vigour, it would have gained ground everywhere; even now a very small European force, accompanied by a supply of arms and ammunition, would put the Lebanon in motion from one end to the other; and the greater part of the chiefs would also take up arms, so much is Mehemet Ali disliked in this part of the country."*

* Letter of July 20, 1840.

CHAPTER XV

BEYROUT—D'JOUNIE—CAPTURE OF SIDON

IN the first days of August, Napier received orders from Sir Robert Stopford, who had now resumed the command of the British squadron, to rejoin him, with the ships which were with him, in Vourla Bay, and accordingly quitted the anchorage at Beyrout. On the 16th, however, as the *Powerful* was off Castel Rosa, on the coast of Caramania, she fell in with the *Ganges* and *Thunderer*, bringing instructions for Napier to hoist a broad blue pennant, as a commodore of the second class, to take under his command the *Ganges*, *Thunderer*, *Edinburgh*, *Castor* frigate and *Gorgon* steamer, and to return immediately to Beyrout. Captain Reynolds, of the *Ganges*, brought with him a copy of the treaty of July 15, and the following letter from Sir Robert Stopford :—

" *Princess Charlotte*, off Mytilene, August 8, 1840.

" DEAR NAPIER,—I hope our Government are not too late in the day for taking active measures in Syria.

" Lord Ponsonby is very sanguine of our success even now, and will not give credit to what I hear from all quarters, as well as from yourself, that the insurgents have been put down. The Government instructions—extracts from which I send you—appear to have been formed upon the notion that the insurrection was still in full force.

" I send you the *Ganges* and *Thunderer*, keeping here *Asia* and *Bellerophon*, one of which will be required to convoy the Turkish troops, who are preparing for Cyprus and Syria. I am looking out for the two ships from Naples and *Revenge* and *Cambridge* from home, but the very strong north winds which have prevailed for some days will retard their arrival.

" Three sail-of-the-line, with frigates and steamers (of which I have none), are ordered to be kept off the Dardanelles, at Lord Ponsonby's summons, to go to the Bosphorus, to protect the capital, in conjunction with the Russians, from any attack on the part of Ibrahim Pasha. . . . I am very glad to find that the Admiralty have at last found it necessary to have a Commodore here, and that it has been given to you.

"Lord Ponsonby informs me that the Porte will send their envoy to Alexandria, with the ultimatum, as soon as possible. The consuls of the four allied Powers are to support these terms with all the influence in their power; and, as the Pasha's determination will be of great importance, I have directed Captain Austin, in the *Cyclops*, to wait the result, and to convey it to me as soon as possible.

"As soon as I am joined by all my expected ships, I shall most probably go towards you, either off the coast of Syria or off Alexandria."

Napier must, indeed, have been glad that he had withdrawn the resignation which he had tendered at Vourla Bay, and retained command of the *Powerful*, since he now found himself in charge of a squadron of six vessels—four of them ships-of-the-line—with an excellent chance of further distinguishing himself. The service on which he was employed was, however, of a very delicate nature. The insurrection was over, and twenty days were allowed Mehemet Ali to accept or reject the treaty of July. In the quarantine ground, two miles from Beyrout, and quite separate from the rest of the troops, were assembled 4,000 Turks, who were known to be dissatisfied and to be anxious to return to Constantinople; and it was important to assist them before they were moved out of reach. It was also important to prevent Souleyman Pasha from removing the stores in the magazine or strengthening the defences of the town. But how far he would be justified in going was a point not easy to decide. "If," he writes, "I commenced hostilities before the expiration of the twenty days, and Mehemet Ali accepted the terms, I should be accused of precipitation, and of causing an unnecessary sacrifice of life; on the other hand, should Mehemet Ali hold out, I might be accused of supineness."*

In these circumstances, he decided to anchor two of his line-of-battle ships as close as he could to the forts which guarded the entrance to the port of Beyrout, and to place the others and the frigate so as to bring their broadsides to bear on the Egyptian camp in the vicinity of the town, but not to fire a shot unless the Egyptians commenced hostilities.

"We shortened sail," writes Lieutenant Elliot, of the *Powerful*, "and stood in under our topsail, topgallant sails, jib and spanker—*Powerful* leading, followed closely by the others, all our guns shotted, all clear for action, and all hands at quarters. A few minutes of the deepest excite-

* Napier's "The War in Syria."

ment prevailed throughout, as we hardly expected they would allow us to take such a threatening position without firing a gun, and that would have produced a broadside from all of us. Dropping our anchor with a spring on the cable, within a musket-shot of the two strongest but very rickety forts that defend the town, and within a few yards of the rocks, lay the *Powerful*. The *Edinburgh* brought her broadside to bear on the other fort, at the farther end of the town; while the *Ganges*, *Thunderer* and *Castor* frigate, which joined us that morning, took positions against the Egyptian camp, containing 11,000 men: 4,000 of them are Turks, taken in the fleet when they were given up to Mehemet Ali, and would be glad to return to their allegiance, if they dared, but are strongly guarded by the Egyptians.

"As soon as the ships were anchored, imagine my delight, when I was called on deck from my quarters on the lower deck, and, putting a letter into my hands, the Commodore said to me, 'Take this letter, containing the terms for the surrender of the town and army, on shore, take the consul with you, see the governor, and demand an immediate answer. The boat will wait for you; be firm, careful, and keep your wits about you.'"

Lieutenant Elliot put off for the shore, and having explained, through an interpreter, his wish to see the governor, was permitted to land. Accompanied by the consul, he proceeded to the palace of the governor, Mahmoud Bey, "an old gentleman dressed in a rich embroidered blue jacket and petticoat trousers, red cap and slippers," and wearing "an immense pair of moustachios that quite concealed his mouth and chin." To him the lieutenant handed Napier's despatch, which demanded that the army should lay down their arms, or that not a man should go outside their encampment until means could be found for transporting them from Beyrout; that the arms, ammunition and stores taken from the mountaineers were to be given up; and that the 4,000 Turks should be allowed to return to Constantinople or otherwise, as should be hereafter determined. Failure to comply with these terms would bring down upon him the vengeance of the British, whose ships were placed in such a position that the town, forts and encampment could be annihilated in a few minutes; but the Commodore hoped that, for the sake of humanity, and to spare the lives of brave men, the governor would agree to his demands.

As he finished reading this peremptory despatch, Elliot tells us, the paper dropped from Mahmoud Bey's hands, "his eye flashed, and he was for some moments speechless." He then

said that he could not give an answer without consulting Abbas Pasha, the general in command of the army, who was at some distance, and wrote a letter to that effect for Elliot to convey to the Commodore. As the old gentleman was obviously endeavouring to gain time, Napier was highly indignant, and sent Elliot on shore again, accompanied this time by Mr. Wood, the dragoman of the British Embassy at Constantinople, with instructions to insist on an answer from either Abbas Pasha or Mahmoud Bey. The consul having furnished them with horses, they rode out to the headquarters of Abbas, who was a nephew of Ibrahim Pasha, and is described as "immensely fat, with a most forbidding countenance, which only varied one moment from the deepest rage to a sleepy, inanimate stupor the next." All the satisfaction they could get from this engaging personage was an assurance that he had no intention of moving the troops at present, though he would not bind himself by any promise. As for the fort and arms, they were entirely under the control of the governor of the town, and he refused to interfere. At their request, he sent for Mahmoud Bey, and the two worthies consulted together, and presently announced that they had decided that no answer should be sent, so that the envoys had to return on board empty-handed.

The Commodore was more angry than ever and would have opened fire on the forts, but, though a single broadside would probably have sufficed to demolish them, the town would necessarily have suffered as well, and many of the innocent inhabitants have been killed; while at the first shot the troops would have retired under cover of the hills near their camp. He was therefore obliged to restrain his indignation, and to content himself with requesting the consul to set a person to watch, in order that no arms or ammunition should be taken out of the forts without him being aware of it.

About midnight, the consul sent off to say that the Egyptians were hard at work removing war material from the forts, upon which Napier despatched Elliot on shore once more, to inform Mahmoud that, if he did not immediately order his men to desist, the ships would open fire. But the wily old man, after keeping him in conversation as long as possible, in order to gain time, declined to give the order required.

Napier, though exceedingly mortified that his threats had not

produced the effect he had expected, could not fail to see the comic side of the affair, and declared that Mahmoud and Abbas were the most cunning diplomatists he had ever met with. Finding that they declined to be intimidated by the threat of a bombardment, which they knew very well that the British were too humane to have recourse to, he confined himself for the next few days to stopping and searching all vessels approaching the port which he suspected of carrying reinforcements, arms or stores for the Egyptian army, with the result that he was soon surrounded by a small fleet of prizes, including a large frigate, laden with arms, ammunition, field-artillery and horses.

For three days Napier lay in the position which he had taken up, to give the Turks an opportunity of rising if they were so disposed, when, finding that they had been moved and mixed up with the Egyptians, he stood out some little distance to a safer anchorage. Shortly afterwards, a vessel from Alexandria carrying despatches to Souleyman Pasha was stopped, and from these he learned that France had promised her support to Mehemet Ali, who, in consequence, had rejected the terms of the treaty of July 15, and given the consuls of the four Powers to understand that it would be perfectly useless for them to return to him at the expiration of the twenty days, as what he had won with the sword he meant to retain with the sword.* About the same time he received a despatch from Lord Ponsonby, announcing that a war with France might be expected at any moment, and recommending him to be on his guard.

Napier's activity during this time was truly remarkable; indeed, so constantly was he engaged, that he is said scarcely to have allowed himself time for sleep. Learning that some Turkish ships, under Admiral Walker, a British officer in the Ottoman service, with some 3,500 troops on board, were on their way to Syria, he removed his pennant on board the *Gorgon* steamer, and ran down the coast as far as D'Jebail, to ascertain the best place for the troops to land. From D'Jebail he went to

* Mehemet Ali had at this time in Syria an army which is estimated at from 70,000 to 80,000 men, for the most part seasoned and well-disciplined troops, of whom 15,000 were at Beyrout, 10,000 at Baalbec, under Ibrahim Pasha, 3,000 in garrison at Sidon, 5,000 in and about Tripoli, and the rest stationed in various parts of the country. With such a force at his command, and with every hope of assistance from France, it is not surprising that he should have believed himself capable of "retaining with the sword what he had won by the sword."

Cyprus, to confer with Admiral Walker, and thence proceeded to reconnoitre St. Jean d'Acre and Sidon, returning to Beyrout after an absence of little more than forty-eight hours.* That the Admiralty highly approved of his conduct at this juncture is proved by a very flattering letter which he subsequently received from Lord Minto, in which the First Lord "assured him of the satisfaction which the activity and energy of his proceedings had afforded them; trusted that he would not imagine that the employment of a second flag-officer on the Mediterranean station could have proceeded from any want of confidence in his zeal, ability, or judgment, in which he placed the utmost reliance," and informed him that he had written to Sir Robert Stopford, "intimating his hope that he would have ample opportunity of employing him advantageously on detached service."†

The rumoured probability of intervention by France on behalf of Mehemet Ali threatened to make Napier's situation a very embarrassing one.

"It will be very difficult to keep clear of France," he writes to Colonel Hodges, "because Mehemet Ali will take up French vessels to bring his stores, and, unless we declare the coast in a state of blockade and warn them off—which we ought to do immediately—we must search French vessels, which they will not allow: I will not do it without orders. A foolish officer searched one yesterday; the captain of the corvette complained, and I immediately wrote to say it was quite a mistake, with which he was satisfied; but any vessel can hoist French colours. I shall do all I can, but I foresee my difficulties."

Napier, often accused of rashness and want of discretion, appears to have acted at this juncture, where a false step might easily have been followed by the gravest complications, with commendable tact and discrimination, and, thanks to his skilful handling of the situation, no unpleasant incident occurred

* "Only think of his [Napier's] energy and activity the other day!" writes Lieutenant Elliot in his "Journal." "He went on board the *Gorgon* steamer, as we thought, only to look along the coast for a mile or two, and was missing for two days. On his return, we found he had run over to Cyprus, reviewed the expedition there, to see what he had to trust to, hurried their motions, and set all the troops a-drilling; then started off to St. Jean d'Acre, examined its fortifications and weak points, and returned without almost anyone but ourselves knowing he was out of the ship."

† Minto to Napier, September 30, 1840.

On September 7—two days after the expiration of the time allowed Mehemet Ali for the acceptance of the ultimatum of the Powers—the *Cyclops* steamer arrived from Alexandria, with the British consul, Colonel Hodges, on board, and the news that war was declared, and that Sir Robert Stopford and the rest of the squadron, together with some Austrian warships and the whole Turkish expedition, were approaching. In the evening, the *Thunderer*, which had been detached to reconnoitre, signalled, "Twenty-one sail in sight," quickly followed by "Extinguish lights," this precaution being adopted in view of the fact that France was known to have nearly that number of vessels in the Mediterranean, and that it was quite within the bounds of possibility that the approaching squadron might be French. However, all doubts were soon removed by the arrival of the *Phœnix* steamer, which Stopford had sent on ahead to announce his arrival, and next morning the rest of the expedition entered the bay.

The British squadron before Beyrout now consisted of the *Princess Charlotte, Powerful, Thunderer, Ganges, Revenge, Edinburgh, Benbow* and *Hastings*, of the line; *Pique, Castor* and *Carysfort*, frigates; *Magicienne* and *Dido*, corvettes; *Wasp* and *Zebra*, 18-gun brigs; and the *Cyclops, Gorgon, Hydra* and *Phœnix*, large steamers, each capable of carrying 500 men. The Austrian squadron was composed of two frigates and two smaller vessels; while the Turks had sent one line-of-battle ship and six frigates and corvettes, with about twenty transports, full of troops.

It was a most imposing sight, we are told, to see this armada take up its position off the town. "Nearer the shore, the Turkish transports, and the numerous native vessels, their high caïque prows and lateen-sails, adding by contrast to the beauty of the picture. Nor was the background less striking—Lebanon's mountains rising from the water's edge, whilst, above all, extended far in the distance the loftier range, which has its origin in the plain of Baalbec."*

The remainder of the day, after the ships had anchored, was employed in consultation, and arrangements for landing the troops, who consisted of 6,000 Turks, 1,500 British and Austrian marines and about 200 engineers and artillerymen. Brigadier-General Sir Charles Smith had come out to take command of

* Hunter, "Expedition to Syria."

the operations on shore; but he had fallen ill, and the military officer next in seniority, a lieutenant-colonel of marines, was a man of neither ability nor energy. The Admiral, in consequence, ordered Napier, whose little campaigns in Portugal justified the hope that he would prove equal to the task, to take command of the troops after a landing had been effected.

We have seen that the Commodore had, with a view to a landing at some future period, caused the coast near Beyrout to be closely reconnoitred, and he had already decided that the place most suitable for that purpose was the little bay and village of D'jounie, about ten miles to the north-west of the town. Several reasons had induced him to fix on this locality. In the first place, it offered every facility for disembarking troops with rapidity and safety; in the second, the ground in the vicinity of the village lent itself readily to the formation of an entrenched camp; and, finally, its situation would enable him to open communication with the mountaineers and furnish them with the arms and ammunition they required.

"All that night," writes Lieutenant Elliot, "we were hard at work with the boats, conveying the troops on board the four steamers, which we crammed till there was not room for another man upon their decks, and what was left we took on board here. Not a soul but the Admiral and Commodore had any idea where we should land, and all was kept a strict secret. The Admiral, it appears, has so much confidence in the judgment and discretion of his gallant second-in-command, that he allowed him to make his own arrangements, with regard to the when and where or how the attack was to be made; and well has his confidence been placed, for no one on earth could have managed better.

"At daylight, the steamers, with all the boats of the fleet in tow, the *Powerful*, *Revenge* and *Thunderer*, and all the smaller ships, were under sail; but a dead calm obliged us to anchor again. A breeze, however, sprung up in the forenoon, when we all stood away to the southward of the town, in which direction we soon saw many of the Egyptians marching in double-quick time. This was only intended as a feint to draw the enemy away, and answered admirably; for, as soon as the breeze freshened, we all bore up and ran helter-skelter to the north, leaving the Egyptians in a few minutes many miles astern, who, in turning about after us, got well peppered by the ships at anchor, who all opened their fire upon them as they passed; and the shells they threw must have done some execution, and were splendidly thrown. The *Powerful*, with her flock, soon ran down to the little bay and village of D'jounie, about ten or twelve miles to the northward; and, ordering the small ships to anchor at certain distances along the shore, we pushed right in, till we

all but touched the ground, with the steamers alongside of us. The *Revenge* and *Thunderer* kept a little out, to act when required. In three hours every man of the troops was landed, without a casualty or a shot fired, and, ere night, had taken up, for safety, commanding positions; the few of the enemy's troops making a precipitate retreat before us.

"All that night we were hard at work, forming entrenchments and arranging our field-pieces, twelve in number, on the all but inaccessible heights. . . . Morning found us pretty well prepared, and all ready to drop with the fatigue of two nights of the heaviest exertion I ever underwent. All, however, seemed in excellent spirits, working like tigers and longing to have a shot; even our brother Turks, who are by no means given to breaking their backs at work, assisted cheerfully in carrying stores and sandbags; and the activity of our Commodore was beyond belief—working, bellowing and running about everywhere; one moment rapping a lazy fellow over the head with a big stick, and the next working away himself."

The position which Napier's force had taken up was not only a very strong one, but one of considerable strategic importance, since it commanded the direct road between Beyrout and Tripoli, and thus practically cut off all communication between these two places, there being no other road, without going far into the interior and making an immense circuit round the mountains. The Commodore, instead of waiting for Ibrahim Pasha, who lay at Baalbec, to make an attack on his camp, resolved to take the initiative himself, and accordingly pushed forward detachments to occupy Ghezira, the capital of the province, and to reconnoitre the roads along which the enemy might advance; while another party succeeded, after some sharp fighting, in capturing the Castle of D'Jebail, a few miles to the northward of D'jounie. On the news of the capture of this place, the people of the surrounding district flocked in to obtain the arms which had been brought for their use, in such numbers that soon all the muskets and ammunition which the Commodore had with him had been distributed, and the *Cyclops* had to be sent for a fresh supply.

Napier was highly elated at finding himself at the head of an army and at the successful opening of his campaign. Although in appearance and manner a sailor of the old school, he never doubted for a moment that, given the opportunity, he would prove himself as capable a leader on land as he was afloat, and his only fear was that he might be superseded in his command before he had had a chance of winning the laurels that he felt

sure awaited him. Thus, on September 20, we find him addressing the following letter to Lord Minto, from the "Headquarters of the Army of Lebanon":—

"My Lord,—Sir Robert Stopford's public letter and my report will acquaint you of our operations here. Since that nothing of any great consequence has occurred. Ibrahim Pasha has been reconnoitring my flanks and front, but he cannot get at me with any hope of success, and I think it is probable he will fall back. The peasantry are coming in from all quarters for arms, and I think they will make the mountains too hot for him. Sir Charles Smith is very unwell and gone to Constantinople, and I am on shore directing the movements of the troops, and get on wonderfully well with the Turks, who are really very slow-coaches; but I think we shall improve. I wish your lordship, however, to be quite aware that it is not with 6,000 Turks, though occasionally assisted by the marines, that Syria is to be conquered. I wish you would send out as many marines as could be spared—they are worth an army of Turks—and if Sir Charles Smith does not return, I trust an Engineer officer of lower rank may be sent out, who will not interfere with me. I have begun this business successfully, and I feel myself quite equal to go on with it; for it is nothing new to me. . . .

"I have the honour to remain, your lordship's most obedient servant,

"Charles Napier."

And to his wife he writes:—

"Wonders will never cease! Just fancy me commanding an army of 7,000 men in the mountains of Lebanon. . . . I expected to be attacked immediately; but now I don't care if they send 20,000 men against me. The whole country are flocking in for arms, and I hope ere long to be able to drive the Egyptians out of Lebanon, and from the coast. . . . I never saw such a beautiful mountainous country as this; it is cultivated to the top of the highest hills. I visit all the posts every morning; am up at four o'clock and on horseback, and go through an enormous deal of fatigue.

"When I am sure what my opponent, with his 20,000 men, intends doing, or if he intends nothing, I shall take 1,000 marines and a couple of steamboats and attack every place on the coast and arm the mountaineers. . . .

"God bless you all! My quarters are in a church, with a gun in it, and a magazine of powder alongside of me. I am in excellent health."

Having ascertained that Ibrahim Pasha had no immediate intention of attacking the camp at D'jounie, Napier was anxious to undertake some bold stroke without delay, and accordingly proposed to Stopford that an expedition should be sent against

Sidon, which was believed to be the dépôt for the southern division of the Egyptian army; while its capture could not fail to produce a great moral effect. The Admiral at first demurred, on the ground that the place was too strongly defended to be taken without considerable loss, but at length, on September 23, he somewhat reluctantly consented. The same day, however, Napier received a letter from him, saying that he proposed to give the command of the expedition to Captain the Hon. Maurice Berkeley, of the *Thunderer*, whose *amour-propre* appears to have been wounded by the fact that Captain Stewart, an officer junior to him in the service, had been employed upon an expedition to Tripoli, and to whom the good-natured Admiral was anxious to make amends.

"Your name, my dear Commodore," he writes, "is too well established, and your liberality and kindness too well known upon points of service, to allow me to suspect for a moment that you would wish to deprive a brother officer of a few sprigs of laurel, with which you are so well covered. The good of the service upon which we are employed is your first wish, and to you our unexpected success is owing, aided as you have been by the zeal of the officers under your command."

At the same time, he requested Napier to organize the force intended for Sidon, and expressed the hope that he would be willing to accompany the expedition, in which event he was sure that Captain Berkeley "would be most happy to attend to all his suggestions."

The Commodore, however, was by no means willing to forgo such a chance of distinction as the command of a successful expedition against so important a stronghold as Sidon would afford him, and to fall in with an arrangement which he declares, in his "War in Syria," "appeared to make him a complete cipher." Accordingly, he proceeded to express his feelings to the Admiral as follows:—

"My dear Admiral,—There is nothing in the whole world that I would not do to please you, or forward the service, but I do not see how I can, with any propriety, put myself under a junior officer, when we shall have 500 English marines and 500 Turks. You must know that as yet I have had all the fag, and surely I ought to reap the advantage of it. Captain Stewart went away without any force, therefore Captain Berkeley cannot complain of me, his senior officer, with a broad pennant flying, commanding an important expedition. God knows I shall be sorry to rob any man of his share of service; but, as you were good

enough to allow me to plan all things, I do think it hard I am not allowed to execute them. As yet I have had nothing but fag, and it is natural I should wish to reap the fruits I have been fagging for; I trust, therefore, you will allow it to go on as you agreed this morning.

"Believe me, etc.,

"CHARLES NAPIER."

To this request Stopford had, of course, no alternative but to accede.

"I cannot resist," he writes, "the formal application made by an officer of your standing to command an expedition, in preference to a junior officer. I have therefore directed Captain Berkeley to proceed towards Sidon, looking out for you on the morning of the 25th off Damour, and to place himself under your orders."

In the meantime, Napier proceeded to give his army a little practice in warfare by making a reconnaissance in force across the Nahr-el-Kelb, and dispersing a strongly-posted body of Albanians, some 400 of whom were made prisoners. On his return from this reconnaissance, he learned, to his disappointment, that the expedition had been abandoned, in favour of the occupation of Tyre. But, after a good deal of discussion, it was resolved to proceed with the original project; and on the evening of June 25, after dining with Stopford, the Commodore "took his leave," promising to be back within forty-eight hours, with the garrison of Sidon.

That same evening, he left Beyrout, with the *Gorgon* and *Cyclops* steamers, to the former of which he had removed his pennant, and at daylight next morning, off Damour, fell in with the squadron under Captain Berkeley, which comprised the *Thunderer*, the *Guerriera*, an Austrian frigate, commanded by the Archduke Charles Frederick, the *Gul Sufide*, a Turkish corvette, the 18-gun brig *Wasp* and the *Hydra* and *Stromboli* steamers. This last-named vessel had just arrived from England with 284 marines on board, under Captain Whylock. The landing force for the undertaking consisted of 750 British marines, under Captains Harrison and Whylock, 100 Austrians, and a battalion of 500 Turks.

On the arrival of the expedition off Sidon, the wind being light, the steamer proceeded to tow the larger vessels to their positions, and a boat was sent in, under a flag of truce, with a summons to the governor to surrender the town. As he refused

to comply, the Turks were put into boats and rendezvoused round the *Cyclops*, and the warships opened their broadsides to drive the enemy from the houses they occupied and the entrenchments which they had thrown up to oppose the landing. In half-an-hour the firing ceased, and the Turks were successfully landed abreast of the town by the *Cyclops*, though not without some little loss. But, as the enemy still clung to their defences, the bombardment was renewed, and the houses in which they were ensconced battered down. The British marines who had been brought out by the *Stromboli* and the Austrian marines were then disembarked and advanced to the attack of the castle; while the rest of the British marines were landed by the *Gorgon* on the beach to the north of the town, where they formed and advanced to the walls.

"While the sailors," says an eye-witness, "were engaged in the perilous task of landing the troops, Commodore Napier, in one of the *Gorgon's* boats, had got under the breach. When my attention was first called to this point, he was nearly up to his armpits in water, making a scaling-ladder of the shoulders of his boat's crew. He succeeded in mounting, but had scarcely time to look in, before a discharge of musketry from an opposite building obliged him to abandon the attempt."*

Nothing daunted, he hurried to another point of attack, placed himself at the head of the British marines, broke into the barracks, and then, skirting the eastern wall to the upper gate of the town, burst it open and seized the citadel. Here he hurried to the summit of one of the turrets, and, as a sign of victory, raised his hat on the point of his sword. The signal was seen by the ships and greeted by a volley of cheers. In a very short time all resistance was at an end, and the town, with the whole of its garrison, six months' stores of bread for them and an immense quantity of arms and ammunition, had fallen into the hands of the Allies. The losses of the British were very slight: a lieutenant of marines, a mate and two seamen killed and about a dozen marines wounded; while the Turkish casualties were also small. Among the documents found was a letter from Souleyman Pasha to the governor, in which he entreated the latter, "for the love of Allah and the Prophet," to stand up and drive

* Pattison Hunter, "Expedition to Syria."

these English into the sea, as an idea was prevalent among his troops that they were invincible.*

The capture of Sidon was a very notable achievement. In five hours from the commencement of the bombardment, a force of less than 1,400 men had taken by storm a town protected by a fort and citadel, and a line of wall defended by more than double their number, not a man of whom escaped. It reflected the highest credit upon Napier, who had not only planned the enterprise and persisted in it, notwithstanding the objections of the Commander-in-Chief, but had carried it out with the utmost skill, and with scarcely any loss.

As almost invariably happens when a town is taken by storm, a good many excesses were committed, though not to the extent that might have been anticipated, considering that a number of the mountaineers of the Lebanon, who were exasperated to the last degree against the Egyptians, had penetrated into the place. Napier, however, exerted himself to the utmost to restrain his troops, and " believed that there never was an occasion when less blood was spilt or disorder easier put an end to."† He was much distressed that he was unable to save the house of Souleyman Pasha from being plundered, and wrote to that general to express his regret.

" I assure you," he says, " I beheld with great regret that your house at Sidon had suffered so much at the late attack. A detachment of Egyptian soldiers had opened fire from your house, which rendered its occupation necessary; and I am to this moment ignorant whether your furniture was broken, without the least necessity, by Egyptian, Austrian, or English soldiers. I think I owe you this explanation, because I often told our consul, Mr. Moore, that it was my intention to protect your family in case of need."‡

Immediately after the taking of Sidon half the captured garrison were embarked and reached Beyrout the same evening. Thus, Napier more than fulfilled his pledge to the Admiral, for having promised to return victorious in forty-eight hours, he was back again in twenty-four !

* The governor of Sidon had certainly done all that a brave man could, and he did not survive the loss of the town that had been committed to his charge. Captured by two marines, he succeeded in effecting his escape, and, gathering a few Egyptians round him, declared that he would fight so long as there was a man who would stand by him. A well-aimed bullet, however, from one of the marines brought him down, upon which his followers threw down their arms.

† " The War in Syria." ‡ Letter of October 1, 1840.

CHAPTER XVI

BATTLE OF BOHARSEF

ON the night of September 12–13, Beyrout had been heavily bombarded, in consequence of a flag of truce which Sir Robert Stopford had sent on shore having been fired upon. But, though the bombardment had completely demolished the forts and walls, and scarcely a house remained whole, the Admiral had not attempted to occupy the place, considering that, as it was untenable from the land side and the enemy was in such force in the neighbourhood, it would only be a risk of life to take possession of it, and serve little purpose. He had accordingly withdrawn most of his ships from before the town, and dispersed them along the coast—a step which Napier considered highly impolitic, "as it gave Souleyman Pasha the opportunity of telling the mountaineers that he had beaten off the British squadron,"* It would certainly appear to have created that impression, for though a large number of their people had joined the Allies, the chiefs of the "Mountain" had hitherto held aloof. The news of the capture of Sidon, however, produced an excellent effect, and soon after the Commodore's return to D'jounie, the Emir Beschir Cassim, nephew and next in succession to old Beschir, the Grand Prince of the Lebanon, arrived in the camp and took command of the mountaineers. His uncle, it should be mentioned, who was an exceedingly cautious old gentleman, had preferred to sit upon the fence and assure each party, in turn, of his friendly intentions; and the Porte had accordingly sent the "Little Prince," as Beschir Cassim was called, a firman authorizing him to occupy his place.

During the Commodore's brief absence, the enemy had established themselves on the heights of Boharsef, to the north-eastward of his camp, burned the houses of the mountaineers of that

* "The War in Syria."

district to the ground, in revenge for their having joined the Allies, and driven their wives and families across the Dog River.

"It was heartrending," writes Napier, "to see the unfortunate women and children encamped under trees in the Mountain, without the means of subsistence, and, on our part, without being able to afford them much relief."

He did, however, everything in his power to alleviate the sufferings of these and other unhappy victims of Ibrahim Pasha's savagery, and "his kindness, combined with the fame of his daring deeds, which, with many exaggerations, was now ringing through the Lebanon, caused him to be adored by the mountaineers, by whom he was called the 'Komodor el Keebeer,' the 'Great Commodore,' and was by many considered as the son of Sir Sidney Smith—the former 'Great Commodore' in Syria—of Acre renown, at the time of its siege by Bonaparte."*

Napier would appear to have been much annoyed at this time by the conflicting counsels of those who surrounded the Admiral, some of whom urged that the troops should be withdrawn from D'jounie, while others proposed an immediate forward movement. This latter advice was tendered by Izzet Pasha, an ignorant and fanatical Turk of the old school, who had lately been appointed governor of Syria, and who wished an attack to be made on the Egyptian general, Osman Pasha's, position at Merouba, a movement which would have exposed the Allies to the danger of being taken in flank by Souleyman's troops, who were within four hours' march of them. "I was urged to undertake this quixotic expedition," writes Napier, "merely to please the old Pasha. This I peremptorily refused."† At the same time, he informed Stopford that he was "turning things over in his mind and should shortly propose him a coup."‡

The "coup" he contemplated was a simultaneous attack upon Beyrout by sea and land; the former directed by the Admiral, the latter by the Commodore, who from D'jounie

* General Elers Napier: "Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B." The author tells us that when he went out to Syria to join his step-father, he was often questioned on this subject by the mountaineers, who appeared to consider the title of Commodore as a family name.

† "The War in Syria."

‡ Napier to Stopford, October 1, 1840.

was to lead a Turkish force across the mountains, descend in rear of Beyrout, and either make an attack from that quarter, or intercept Souleyman's retreat, should he have evacuated the place on its being attacked by the squadron.

Beyrout once in the hands of the Allies, he then intended to make an attack upon Acre, the fall of which would assuredly prove the death-warrant of Mehemet Ali's dominion in Syria.

At the beginning of October, he went on board the *Hydra* steamer and proceeded southwards along the coast; and, after visiting Tyre and Sidon, where it was proposed to winter the Turkish troops, boldly reconnoitred Acre. As the *Hydra* was steaming along its sea-wall well within range of the batteries, a heavy fire was opened upon the daring vessel, one of the shots striking her under the counter.

"The Commodore," writes Pattison Hunter, "was sitting in an arm-chair by the wheel, and, although several gallant officers on board began to look a little astonished at the thickly coming missiles, the sturdy Commodore did not so much as turn his head; but in a calm voice, and motioning with his hand, said to the steersman: 'Port a little—port—that will do!' And thus, the ship's head being slightly altered, the enemy's range was so far confounded."*

On his return to D'jounie, Napier learned, to his great satisfaction, that the Emir Beschir Cassim, taking advantage of Ibrahim Pasha having withdrawn part of the Egyptian force before Merouba, had attacked and defeated Osman Pasha, taking between 400 and 500 prisoners, and obliging him to fall back on Basquinta, at the head of the Dog River. He at once decided that the time for the execution of the project he had formed had come, and, having obtained the Admiral's consent to his plans, he rode out to the Emir's camp to confer with him on the matter. Before leaving, he wrote to Lord Minto:—

"The Admiral's despatches will inform your lordship what is passing here. The Little Prince—the Emir Beschir—destroyed Osman Pasha's army on the 4th with his mountaineers, and crossed over Dog River this morning. I have now formed the Turkish troops, and am preparing to move forward the whole army by land and water, preparatory to attacking Souleyman Pasha, who is still at Beyrout and in the neighbourhood. The town is strongly barricaded, and as yet we have not attempted it. If we succeed in moving him, we have little more to do

* "Expedition to Syria."

in Lebanon, and I do not think the enemy will ever enter those provinces again. . . . I hear Sir Charles Smith is better. If he is able to work, my functions cease, which I regret. However, I have had a glorious time of it, and all my plans have succeeded."*

This letter did not reach England until the second week in November, when the First Lord, often so curt in his communications with Napier, replied in the most flattering manner imaginable :—

"Admiralty, 12th November, 1840.

"SIR,—I am just starting for the country, and have little more than time to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th of October. Sir Robert Stopford's despatches have not yet reached us, but I have received his private letters down to the 23rd, and intelligence from other sources of the successful progress of your operations; and I cannot allow an opportunity to pass without assuring you of the very high sense I entertain of the signal services you have rendered, of the energy, activity, skill and gallantry you have displayed, and of the indefatigable zeal and exertion which have enabled you to triumph over difficulties such as many might have been unwilling to encounter.

"I still continue to look with much anxiety on the coast of Syria, and not without a hope that your triumphs may be closed by the reduction of St. Jean d'Acre.

"I have, etc.,

"MINTO."

On his return from his interview with the "Little Prince," Napier passed over ground which had been the scene of recent skirmishes between the Egyptian troops and the mountaineers, and was horrified to find the road strewn with dead and dying Egyptians, some of them stark-naked, for the mountaineers, with a refinement of cruelty, instead of killing their prisoners, had stripped them, and left them to perish of hunger and exposure. With the utmost difficulty, he succeeded in persuading the peasants to place the poor wretches in a small cottage by the roadside; but this act of humanity delayed him, and he was obliged to pass the night at the small hamlet of Argentoun, where, he tells us, not even an egg was to be procured for love or money, so that they had to go supperless to bed, there to encounter some very unpleasant bed-fellows.

"Everybody is astonished at the fatigue I go through," he writes to his wife. "I have been eleven hours on horseback, over most dreadful roads, but through a beautiful country. I have five horses; three of

* Letter of October 7, 1840.

them very fine. I took them all. You would be surprised to see me starting out with my whole Staff. We have all been very sickly, but I never was in better health or better fit for work than I am now."

It is indeed astonishing how a man well past his prime could have withstood the overpowering heat of the Syrian summer and the excessive fatigue to which Napier was continually exposing himself at this time, for the majority of his countrymen appear to have already begun to feel the effects of the climate, and there was hardly a ship in the squadron with less than 100 sick on board.* But, as one who knew him intimately observes, his iron frame, together with a constant state of excitement, carried him through what had already stricken with disease and death many a younger man. †

On the Commodore's return to D'jounie on the 8th, preparations were immediately made for a simultaneous move on Beyrout by sea and land. General Jochmus,‡ his "Chief of Staff," marched out of the camp with four Turkish battalions, occupied Kornet Sherouan,§ and pushed his advance posts as far as Boharsef, on the heights above which a few of the enemy's light troops were observed.

In the evening, the Admiral, seized with misgivings as to the success of the intended movement, wrote to Napier, saying that he considered it "pregnant with risk and uncertainty"; but the latter assured him that he had "received most satisfactory information, and that he might rely upon it that he should do nothing rash."

At daylight on the 9th, he sent an Arab battalion, composed of Egyptian deserters, to join Jochmus, and then, having written to the Emir Beschir Cassim, requesting him to cross the Dog River immediately and join him on the heights of Boharsef the following morning, he left D'jounie and started for Kornet Sherouan, where he arrived about nine o'clock. About the same time, the *Princess Charlotte* proceeded in tow of a steamer to Beyrout,

* Napier to Minto, October 7, 1840.

† General Elers Napier.

‡ Jochmus was a German soldier of fortune, who had fought in the War of Independence in Greece and subsequently in Spain, where he attained the rank of general, and had recently entered the Ottoman service.

§ Napier, in his "War in Syria," calls this place Ornacaguan; but the above is the correct appellation.

and two other steamers, with a Marine and a Turkish battalion, to St. George's Bay, to keep Souleyman in check.

On reaching Kornet Sherouan, the Commodore learned that, though there had been a little skirmishing, it was not believed that the enemy were at hand in any force; and he was therefore considerably astonished, while at breakfast at the convent, to hear the sound of heavy firing, which was followed by the arrival of a picket, with the news that his advance-posts had been driven in. He immediatcly left the convent and ordered up strong reinforcements, which counter-attacked and obliged the Egyptians to retire in their turn. But he was not a little taken aback to perceive, when he reached the recaptured position, the enemy in very considerable force and strongly posted on the mountains to his right.

It was, in fact, the redoubtable Ibrahim Pasha himself by whom the Commodore was thus most unexpectedly confronted. At the head of some 3,000 to 4,000 men, Ibrahim was advancing to the assistance of Souleyman, who had written to inform him that he was now so reduced by desertion and sickness, that, unless speedily reinforced, he would be obliged to surrender.

After consultation with his old friend Colonel Hodges and other officers, Napier decided that they must await the arrival of the Emir Beschir Cassim, as a frontal attack on the enemy's position promised little hope of success, without the Emir's co-operation. No forward movement could therefore be attempted until the following morning at earliest.

The position occupied by the Commodore's force overlooked St. George's Bay and the town of Beyrout, and on the morning of the 10th Napier saw that the Egyptians were evacuating the town. The satisfaction which this sight afforded him was, however, considerably discounted by the arrival of two letters from the Admiral. One, dated the previous day, informed him of the return of Sir Charles Smith, with a firman from the Sultan appointing him Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish forces, and expressed the hope that he would " listen to and receive him with kindness, not bordering upon any feeling of disappointment." The other, written that morning, contained a formal order " to return without a moment's loss of time, and with due security to his troops, which seemed in some degree of insecurity."

Napier, however, judged that to retreat would be disastrous,

as it would expose his ally, the Emir Beschir, to certain destruction, besides which he felt confident of victory, and accordingly replied as follows :—

"My dear Admiral,—Since you have given the command to Sir Charles Smith, of course, I shall return to my ship. I have been too much annoyed with other people's plans since I have had the command to offer mine to my successor. It is no part of my character to receive my successor with either pique or unkindness.

"You do not seem to be at all aware of my present position. I am strongly posted. The enemy is within musket-shot of me, strongly posted also. The Emir Beschir is marching on his rear, and I have two battalions ready to cross Dog River higher up to support him, so that, if he advances, as he writes me he is doing, we shall probably destroy him [the enemy], but wish you to understand that it is probable that Souleyman Pasha will send some more men up here, and you have taken away from my right the Marines and a Turkish battalion. They ought to be sent back, and the steamboats, if you can spare them, should be kept in the Bay, for, if we defeat his army, we ought to fall instantly on Souleyman, and, even if we retire from him, this ought to be done also.

"Admiral Bandeira* informs me that four hundred men have already moved up to join the enemy.

"Believe me, etc.,

"Charles Napier.

"P.S.—I have just received a note from Sir Charles Smith, who, I hear, is gone to Tyre. If I were to retire, as he says you wish me to do, the Emir Beschir and all his men would be cut to pieces.

"I hope you will send me all the Marines immediately, which will render my victory certain when the Emir arrives."

The only effect of this communication was to bring a still more emphatic order to retire from the Admiral :—

"The Sultan's firman, and not I, have given the command of the Turkish troops to Sir Charles Smith.

"I have not taken away the Marines from your right. It is contrary to my instructions to send them far up the country, and they have been kept in the steamboats, according to the intended plan, until they were wanted to secure Beyrout. I cannot, therefore, send you any Marines, and, as Sir Charles Smith is now commanding the troops, I have only to repeat his orders, that you either fall back upon D'jounie, or come down to where the steamers are, and were always intended to be, for embarkation.

"You will, of course, apprise the Emir of your intended retreat from your present position, and not expose him to the risk of being singly attacked."

* The commander-in-chief of the Austrian squadron.

Notwithstanding these most positive orders, Napier was fully resolved to put his fortune to the touch, and only awaited news of the arrival of the Emir to order a general advance. General Elers Napier, in his "Reminiscences of Syria," thus describes the terrain of the approaching action :—

"From below, the village of Kornet Sherouan appears to constitute the very summit of the crest on which it stands; but, on surmounting this latter, it is found to be merely the commencement of a long, narrow neck of land, serving as a communication with successive ranges of much loftier hills beyond.

"This ridge, called the heights of Ardahley, partly covered with straggling pine trees, is bounded on the north by a precipitous valley, named the Wad-é-Slefe; whilst its southern base is skirted by a deep ravine, called the Wad-é-Shawee, or Valley of Drought.

"The road from Kornet Sherouan leads, for upwards of two miles, along the summit of this 'hog's back,' and then, after a slight declivity, surmounts, by a rugged zig-zag path, the steep ascent, broken into a succession of terraces, known by the name of Kalet Meidan, where, under cover of numerous ledges of large upright rocks thickly strewn on the crest of the hill, was the first position of the Egyptians. About 600 yards to the southward, along the same line of heights—but separated in the first instance by a level plateau, of probably one hundred yards in extent, and the remainder of the ground of a most precipitous nature, broken into high stone-walled terraces—was the second position of the enemy; whilst Ibrahim in person, with his principal force, occupied the commanding eminence of Boharsef, about a thousand paces further to the rear. The latter, although separated from the second position by ground of a very steep and nearly impracticable nature, presented a sufficiently level surface; and, though here and there dotted with pine trees, was tolerably well adapted for cavalry movements."

The Egyptian position was thus, as the Commodore himself describes it, "very strong, and perhaps might have been considered unassailable,"* and the magnitude of the task before him was materially increased by the fact that the majority of the troops he commanded were Turks, of whom he knew little, and who, though generally admirable in defence, very rarely distinguish themselves in offensive operations.

The Emir had been expected early in the forenoon, but several hours passed before Napier received the welcome news that he was approaching. Upon this, he immediately ordered his

* "The War in Syria."

troops to advance along the ridge of Ardahley and two small field-guns to open fire upon the first Egyptian position. Then he detached the mountaineers, under Lieutenant Duncan, of the *Powerful*, with orders to throw themselves among the rocks and work their way up the heights, so as to turn the enemy's left, and ordered two Turkish battalions and the Arab battalion to advance along the winding road under cover of their fire, and attack the Egyptians in front.

The mountaineers were " rather shy, and required a good deal of coaxing, and occasionally a little manual persuasion, to get them forward,"* but, knowing the country, they made a wide circuit and eventually succeeded in reaching the heights without being observed by the enemy.

One of the Turkish battalions was now sent forward *en tirailleur*, and advanced somewhat cautiously, but bravely enough, in the face of a heavy fire, and unexpectedly found much good cover among the rocks. A second battalion, under General Jochmus, was directed to advance along the road in column; but not relishing the sharp fire which greeted them, they soon broke into skirmishing order and advanced so rapidly—" with the exception of some few whom I was obliged to stir up with my stick "†—that Napier decided to keep his last battalion in reserve, to cover their retreat, in the event of disaster.

Some anxious moments ensued, for everything depended on the steadiness of the Turks when they came in contact with the enemy on the top of the heights. But Napier's suspense was soon at an end, since, on reaching the crest, the Turks ran in upon the Egyptians with the bayonet, upon which the latter immediately threw down their arms.

The Commodore now brought up his reserve and prepared to attack the second hostile position, which was even more difficult of access than the first. The Egyptians kept up a heavy fire, and the Turks, being apparently of opinion that they had done enough for one day, showed very little disposition to advance

* " The War in Syria."

† According to General Elers Napier, the Commodore had recourse to a more persuasive weapon than a stick, in order to get the laggards to go forward. " Observing," he writes, " one Turkish soldier particularly reluctant to advance, he seized a musket, and, in the anger of the moment, would have blown out his brains, had not the piece fortunately missed fire, when it was taken out of his hands by his friend Colonel Hodges."—" Reminiscences of Syria."

further, and took refuge behind the rocks which had lately afforded the enemy such effective shelter. "They were, however, soon driven out of their snug quarters by an enemy they little expected; for the Commodore, finding commands and entreaties of no avail, had recourse to persuasion of another kind. The ground was covered with large stones and fragments of rock, and with these he pelted his brave soldiers so effectively in the rear that he succeeded in dislodging them from cover."* Then, placing himself at their head, with General Jochmus, his aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Bradley, of the *Powerful*, Selim Pasha, and other Turkish officers, he led them forward at the double across the level plateau which intervened between the height they had just captured and the second Egyptian position, which was carried in less than half an hour. The hitherto invincible Ibrahim thereupon fled, and his troops dispersed in all directions, leaving the whole of their baggage, ammunition and stores in the hands of the victors. The losses of the latter were singularly small, not more than 50 killed and wounded; those of the Egyptians were never ascertained, but nearly 700 were taken prisoners.

Such was the mountain battle of Boharsef—a victory gained by a British naval officer, at the head of a body of Turkish troops of very doubtful quality, over a skilful and experienced general, who had until then never known defeat, and seasoned soldiers, who had always easily had the upper hand in their encounters with their Ottoman opponents. Admitting that the Egyptians, when once brought to bay, offered but a feeble resistance, this ought in no way to detract from the credit due to Napier, not only for the gallantry and resolution which he displayed during the action itself, but for the quickness of decision and accuracy of calculation of which he gave proof, when suddenly confronted by an enemy whom he had not expected to meet, and who was so strongly posted that he might well have despaired of dislodging him. In short, his conduct, worthy of high praise even in the case of a professional soldier of long experience, is quite remarkable, when we consider his very limited acquaintance with military operations.

Shortly after the action, Napier received the following letter from the Admiral, who, still in ignorance of his success, was

* Major-General Elers Napier: "Reminiscences of Syria."

highly indignant at the Commodore's delay in carrying out the order he had sent him to retire :—

" *Princess Charlotte*, off Beyrout,
" October 10, 1840.

" SIR,—It is my positive direction, in conjunction with the opinion of Colonel Sir Charles Smith, Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish forces, by the appointment of the Sultan, and whose directions, with regard to every military movement, I am instructed to follow, that you return forthwith to the position of D'jounie, with the troops now under your command, with all due caution and circumspection.

" I have the honour to be, Sir,
" Your obedient Servant,
" ROBERT STOPFORD, Admiral and
Commander-in-Chief.

" To Commodore Napier."

To this letter Napier replied :—

" October 10.

" MY DEAR ADMIRAL,

" I, this afternoon, attacked Ibrahim Pasha and totally defeated him. He was driven from position to position, and Selim Pasha is still after him. I do not know how many prisoners we have made. The Turks behaved nobly.

" Yours faithfully,
" CHARLES NAPIER."

Had Napier been defeated, he would almost certainly have been brought to a court-martial; but, since he had been victorious, his disregard of orders was overlooked, and he received a most complimentary letter from Stopford, in which the Admiral informed him that " no words of his could do justice to his splendid operations at Boharsef."

" I do most heartily assure you," the writer continues, " of being fully sensible of the benefit which I, and the whole expedition, have received from your indefatigable services, and, on rejoining the *Powerful*, your conscience may be perfectly satisfied of your having accomplished all that could be done."

On the morning of the 11th, Napier was joined by Izzet Pasha, the governor of Syria, with two battalions which had been left at Kornet Sherouan, and which, when an urgent message had been sent for them during the battle on the previous day, he had refused to bring up. Shortly afterwards, he received

intelligence that 2,000 of Souleyman Pasha's army had deserted, upon which, notwithstanding the objections of Izzet, he immediately put his troops in motion. But, on descending from the hills, he found that Souleyman had decamped during the night towards Zochlé, leaving all his artillery behind him.

Later in the day, Napier had an interview with the Admiral and Sir Charles Smith, in which he strongly urged the expediency of following up Souleyman and crushing him. As this measure was not approved of, he next proposed an immediate attack upon Acre,* but apparently with as little success; whereupon he returned to his ship, in high dudgeon, fully determined, as he said, "not to mix further in military affairs." He had held the command ashore, which he now resigned to Sir Charles Smith, just over a month, during which brief period he had stormed and taken Sidon, twice defeated the Egyptians in battle; secured, including prisoners and deserters, fully 10,000 of the enemy, and distributed between twenty and thirty thousand stands of arms amongst the mountaineers, with whom, as we have mentioned, he had achieved an immense popularity†—a record of which he surely had every right to feel proud!

"There is not, or cannot be, a man here," writes Napier's enthusiastic admirer, Lieutenant Elliot, "who does not give the highest praise to our Commodore for his tact, discretion and valour. The Turks have taken a great fancy for him, and almost adore him. Proud as they are towards Christians, the soldiers flock round him, kiss his hands, or even the tails of his coat; and the war-cry amongst them at the last battle was, 'For God, the Prophet and the 'Giaour' Commodore!' whom they say they would follow to the world's end! Such is the effect of true bravery, conducted with discretion and ultimate victory, among even such barbarians as these are."

* This—although many years afterwards denied by those who sought to injure his professional reputation—was a measure always most strongly urged by Napier. Thus, on October 15, 1840, he writes to Lord Minto: "Tripoli and Acre both ought to be attacked before the bad weather comes on." On the same day, to Lord Palmerston: "What is meant to be done, I know not, but Tripoli should be seized and afterwards Acre, both can be taken by showing a bold front." And to Admiral Sir William Parker: "Tripoli ought to be taken immediately, which should be followed by an attack on Acre, both of which would fall; but, if they are allowed breathing time, it will be more difficult."

† "This attachment," writes General Elers Napier, "continued undiminished for years, and even after Sir Charles Napier's death, letters of condolence were received from his mountain friends, lamenting, in Eastern phraseology, that sad event."

CHAPTER XVII

BOMBARDMENT OF ACRE—CONVENTION OF ALEXANDRIA

BY the end of October Tortosa and Tripoli* had fallen, and the Admiral and Sir Charles Smith decided to make an attack upon St. Jean d'Acre, now the only strong position on the Syrian coast still in possession of the Egyptians. On the evening of the 31st, the expedition sailed from Beyrout, having on board some 3,000 Turkish soldiers, who, with 2,000 British marines, were to form the landing force; but, owing to light winds, it was not until late on November 2 that it anchored off the famous fortress which had defied Bonaparte, and which Ibrahim Pasha had besieged for six months, before want of water obliged the garrison to surrender.

The Allied fleet consisted of eight sail-of-the-line, five frigates, four steamers and two brigs. The *Revenge*, the *Pique* and the *Talbot* had been cruising off the place for some time, and had made a tolerably accurate survey of the coast and buoyed some shoals which were not known; for, though a British squadron had been there in 1799, the Admiralty had not been able to furnish Sir Robert Stopford with anything like a correct plan of the fortifications and soundings.

St. Jean d'Acre stands on an angle, and presents two faces to the sea, to the west and south-east. They were walled and bristled with cannon—in one place a double tier. It had been originally intended that the ships should form a breach, in which the troops were to be landed; but soundings, taken under cover of the darkness, showed that the ships could hardly get near enough to form a breach under a considerable time; and this plan was therefore abandoned in favour of a bombardment of the whole place with every gun that could be brought to bear, and from as close a distance as the depth would allow.

* Tripoli was evacuated by the Egyptians, after blowing up the magazine.

When Napier went on board the flagship for his instructions, the Admiral informed him that he had discussed his plan of action with Captain Boxer, who commanded the *Pique*, one of the vessels which had been reconnoitring the place, and decided that he would leave the *Princess Charlotte*, in order that she might go into action, and go on board the *Phœnix* steamer, from which he would direct operations. The three other steamers would tow in three line-of-battle ships to their positions under the batteries, then return and tow in three more, and so on, until all the ships were in position.

To this plan Napier at once strongly objected, characterizing it as dangerous and impracticable; but Captain Boxer cut short his flow of eloquence, by saying: "We have settled the whole of the matter and the positions to be taken up, and, Commodore, it is no use your interfering."*

Napier thereupon angrily snatched up his hat and went back to his own ship, where, as he told the House of Commons in April 1856, "he spent the night ruminating on the impolicy of the plan and the certain failure which he knew would attend it." Next morning, after consultation with Captain Henderson, of the *Gorgon* steamer, he went on board the flagship with that officer, and bluntly told the Admiral that he felt it to be his duty, as his second-in-command, to tell him that his plan was doomed to utter failure. He then asked Henderson how long the steamers would require to return and tow the second three ships into position, after taking in the first three. Henderson answered at least two hours, upon which Napier pointed out that for the whole of that time the first three ships would be exposed to the concentrated fire of a number of batteries, and that, in all probability, long before their consorts had arrived to assist them, they would be completely disabled.

Stopford thereupon gave way; the towing scheme was abandoned, and it was decided that the ships should go in with the sea-breeze, which usually sprang up towards noon, in two divisions: one, comprising the *Powerful, Princess Charlotte, Thunderer* and *Bellerophon*, with the *Revenge* in reserve, though she was to keep under sail, were to attack the western face of the fortifications; the other, consisting of the Turkish Admiral's (Walker Bey) ship, the *Benbow, Edinburgh, Pique, Castor, Hazard*,

* See page 392 *infra*.

Carysfort, *Talbot* and *Wasp*, with three Austrian and Turkish frigates, were to assail the south-eastern face.

To Napier, in the *Powerful*, was assigned the task of leading in his division; and his orders were to go in from the south, and anchor off the south-western angle of the fortress; while the other ships were to take up their positions in succession to the northward of him, in the order named above.

About 10 a.m., the wind at that time blowing slightly from the southward, the signal was made to weigh. But the breeze soon dropped, nor was it until towards 2 p.m. that it increased sufficiently to enable the ships to approach the fortifications. The wind had then veered round to the northward, as the Commodore tells us he had been expecting it would.

"On its doing so," he says, "it at once became apparent to me that for me to anchor on the south-western angle of the fortress, so as to allow the ships astern of me to pass to windward in succession, and anchor ahead of me, was impossible. The order in such cases was so well known that I thought there could be no doubt about it. There was, in fact, only one mode which could be adopted where ships were to anchor in succession; that was for the leading ship to take up a position under the first battery, for the next to pass to windward and anchor ahead of the first, the next to follow the first two and anchor ahead of the second, and so on till the whole line was formed. That was the mode formed in anchoring in succession. When, therefore, the wind veered to the northward, and when I saw that I could not anchor on the south-western face of the fortress, I had to decide the course to be adopted with the utmost promptitude. There was not a moment to be lost. I did not go to the southward, and anchor on the south-west of the place, as, had I done so, the ships following, as I have already stated, could not have got ahead of me. The Admiral just at that moment sent to me to ascertain what I was doing. I said, in reply, that I was going to the northward, and immediately made signal to tack, passing well to windward of the north-western angle of the fortress, the other ships following me. I passed a small battery, on coming to which the master asked if he should let go the anchor, when I desired him not to do so, as the battery was but small; but he passed on and anchored alongside the strongest part of the walls of Acre, on the north-western front.

"After I let go my anchor, the whole thing having been reversed, I naturally expected that the ships following would pass outside of me, and, by anchoring in succession ahead of me, occupy the ground between the south-western and the north-western angle of the fortress. It was such a common occurrence, that I did not think any officer could have had any doubt, or been led into any mistake about it. . . . Why, the thing was so well known in naval tactics, while, at the same time, it was so consonant with common sense, that every one knew about it. If the

ship leading in was to pass along one, two, three, four or five of the enemy's ships, before she came to anchor and took up her station, why there was every chance of her being disabled by the successive broadsides of these ships before she got to her station. If, then, that was the case in attacking ships, it held stronger as regarded an attack on batteries, where, if the leading ship was to pass along five or six of them, receiving the fire of each of them before she came to anchor, she would be of little use. But, by the leading ship engaging the first ship or battery (in the case of an attack on batteries) she came to, and the one following her passing ahead of her and engaging the next, and the others doing the same in succession, that danger was prevented.

"Well, this being the well-known and recognized system, I confess that I never felt more astonished than when I saw the *Princess Charlotte*, which was following me, let go her anchor astern of me. The *Thunderer* did the same, though I really could not say from recollection which was first.

"I might, however, be asked why, in these circumstances, I did not signal? But there was not time; the ships would have been at anchor before I could have done so; and, besides, if it was the duty of anyone to signal, that duty most certainly devolved upon the Commander-in-Chief, who was outside for the very purpose of directing the movements of the fleet. But no signal was made by him, except, I believe, that he signalled the *Thunderer* to get out of the way.* But what did Lord Nelson say? Why, that 'no ship could do wrong which anchored alongside the enemy.' I anchored alongside the enemy, and that, too, at the strongest portion of the face of the fortress. I was on . . . as close to the batteries as the depth of water would allow me. It was true the ships following me did not take up their proper positions. It was, no doubt, a mistake their not doing so. They thought I had got into shoal water, but I made no signal of 'shoal water,' and all I can say is, I took up my proper position, and the other ships did not. I do not mean to say that it was for want of skill that they did not do so, as I believe that they were under the impression that they were to keep always to the northward of me."†

The confusion consequent on this misunderstanding was to some degree corrected by the reserve ship, the *Revenge*, being brought up to take the place originally intended for the *Powerful*,‡

* "Captain Berkeley (of the *Thunderer*), seeing a sufficient opening (and being under the same impression and having the same orders as Captain Austin to anchor in succession), pushed in between the *Princess Charlotte* and *Bellerophon*. The Admiral, seeing room ahead of the *Powerful*, made the signal for the *Thunderer* to weigh; but she was so jammed between the *Princess Charlotte* and *Bellerophon*, that, though she tried, it was impossible to move without fouling either one or the other."—"The War in Syria."

† See his speech in the House of Commons on April 4, 1856, in defence of his conduct at Acre.

‡ Napier, in his "War in Syria," asserts that he took upon himself to order the *Revenge* to take up this position; but Captain Berkeley, in a letter to Captain Codrington, dated March 29, 1856, says that it was the Admiral who gave the order.

and, anyway, it made no sort of difference to the result of the action. The fire of the line-of-battle ships anchored within some 500 yards of the fortifications was overwhelming, while that of the smaller vessels on the south-eastern side was scarcely less effective. The Egyptians fought their guns bravely enough, but, in the full belief that the ships would never venture so close in shore, but would anchor outside of a shoal that would have kept them at a considerable distance, they had elevated all their guns too much, and built up the lower part of the embrasures with stones and sand-bags for protection; so that they could not depress them again. The consequence was that though the masts and rigging of the ships suffered severely, the *Powerful* losing her main-topmast, mizen-topsail-yard, fire-stay, and all her mizen-topmast rigging, they were seldom hulled, and the casualties were very few.

After the bombardment had lasted some three hours, the grand magazine* blew up with a terrific explosion, which carried up a large portion of the town and batteries, and shook every ship to the keel. Not less than 1,200 men are said to have been blown up or killed by the fall of the ruins. The fire of the enemy, which, prior to this catastrophe had already begun to slacken, now gradually died away, and before darkness fell ceased altogether. The ships thereupon ceased firing also, though, with the exception of the *Powerful* and one or two which had been badly crippled, they remained in position, ready to renew hostilities in the morning. Soon after midnight, however, it was found that the enemy had evacuated the town, upon which the troops landed and took possession of it.

"The towers and walls," writes Lieutenant Elliot, "present a mass of ruin beyond conception; but what place could withstand the fire of more than 400 heavy cannons, directed against it for four hours, with a precision and rapidity unknown in any former warfare?"†

* "The magazine was in a principal bastion of the inner line of works, at the south-east corner of the land side. A number of donkeys and other animals were moored in rows on a sort of esplanade near it, and 1,200 men (two battalions of soldiers) were drawn up there too, when off it went, destroyed them all, threw down some hundreds of feet of the fortifications, filled the wide ditch, and shook and silenced the guns on the outer wall at the south-east corner."—Letter of Captain Henry Codrington to Sir E. Codrington, November 4, 1840.

† According to Captain (afterwards Sir Henry) Codrington, the *Princess Charlotte*, the largest ship of the squadron, expended 4,500 32-lb. shot, and his ship, the *Talbot*, one of the smallest, fired 1,200 from her 15 guns.

THE BOMBARDMENT AND CAPTURE OF ST. JEAN D'ACRE.
November 3, 1840.

[To face p. 198.

From an engraving by Ridley, after a painting by Graham.

COMMODORE SIR CHARLES NAPIER, K.C.B., Etc.

[To face p. 159.

Early next morning, Napier went on board the *Phœnix*, where the Admiral still was. He received him on the quarter-deck, in the presence of Admiral Walker and other officers, and when, after congratulating him on the capture of Acre, Napier expressed the hope that he was satisfied with the position he had taken up, he replied, to his surprise and mortification, in the most abrupt manner: "Not at all! you ought to have gone on to the south-west angle."

"That I was hurt beyond measure," writes Napier, "can easily be conceived. An Admiral passing a censure after an action on his second-in-command was not to be borne with temper; some few words passed on both sides, which I do not recollect, and the conversation finished by my asking, in an abrupt manner, if he had any further commands for me, which was answered in the negative in the same style. I am not at all aware that I had ever given the least cause for this break out. I certainly had frequently pressed the Admiral to carry on active measures, and perhaps in too urgent a manner, but I had no reason to expect that I should ever have been so treated."

In high indignation, the fiery Commodore returned to his ship, and wrote to his Commander-in-Chief asking for a court-martial. This was refused, upon which he wrote another letter, requesting that, if a court-martial were to be denied him, the correspondence might be sent to the Admiralty. Just, however, as he had finished this epistle, several of his brother officers, who feared that a difference of so serious a nature between the Admiral and his second-in-command might put a stop to the promotions and rewards which it was expected would be liberally bestowed on the squadron, came "to entreat him to be pacified."

For some time, however, Napier, who "considered himself unjustly and indecorously treated, and that his character as an officer would suffer," was deaf to all persuasion. But, at length, after two days, he consented, "on condition that the Admiral would write him a proper letter on the subject," though he yielded, he tells us, much against his own inclination, adding: "And I believe even now [1844] I was wrong in doing so."*

Stopford thereupon sent him the following note:—

"November 6.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I do not apprehend that a difference of opinion implies a censure upon either party, as I cannot allow infallibility to anybody.

* "The War in Syria."

"That I differed in opinion with you is true, but that, therefore, censure was intended is without foundation.

"Believe me, my dear sir, yours truly,

"ROBERT STOPFORD."

To which the Commodore replied :—

"November 7.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am glad to find by your note, which I received last night, that you had no intention to censure me. I placed my ship to the best of my judgment. I could do no more.

"Believe me, etc.,

"CHARLES NAPIER."

Later the same day, Napier received a very amiable note from the Admiral, one of the kindest and most generous of men :—

"November 7.

"MY DEAR COMMODORE,—I am very happy to find that every unpleasant feeling has been removed from your mind respecting any censure —real or implied—upon your conduct in the attack upon Acre. I regret very much that your private note upon the subject, written the day before yesterday, has disappeared. Should it turn up hereafter, I will take care to send it."

Thus, peace was re-established, and this unpleasant affair terminated. But sixteen years later, with the most ungenerous feeling and execrable taste, it was brought before the House of Commons by the then First Lord of the Admiralty and the First Sea Lord, with the object of damaging Napier's reputation. But of this we shall speak in its proper place.

The Admiral having decided to increase the squadron off Alexandria and to send Napier there to take command of it, a few days after the capture of Acre he proceeded to Beyrout to victual and water his ships, and on November 15 sailed for Egypt. The day before leaving Beyrout, he wrote to Lord Palmerston to give the Government the benefit of his views on the situation :—

"I believe," he writes, "the best thing to settle this affair would be at once to say to Mehemet Ali : 'Withdraw from Syria and give up the Turkish fleet, and you shall keep Egypt.' If your lordship and the Allies have any notion of that, try me as a negotiator, with six sail-of-the-line, which I am to have, and I dare say I should succeed. I believe Egypt would be just as well governed by him as it would be by one of the Turkish Pashas ; he is an old man, and it is hardly worth while risking a European war to turn him out."

On the 21st, he arrived off Alexandria, where he found the *Rodney, Revenge, Ganges, Vanguard* and *Cambridge* of the line, with the *Carysfort* frigate and *Medea* steamer. Before communicating with the squadron, he ran in to reconnoitre the defences, and came to the conclusion that, with the exception of the Castle of Pharos, there was nothing that could successfully resist a strong naval force. At the same time, he recognized that an attack, unless seconded by a considerable body of troops, would be futile, and that, at that season of the year, even if sufficient troops could be spared, it would not be prudent to attempt one.

On joining the squadron, Napier was shown a despatch, dated October 15, from Lord Palmerston to Lord Ponsonby, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, which stated that, in [redacted]pinion of the Government, the representatives of the four [redacted]wers should strongly recommend the Sultan that, if at an early period Mehemet Ali made his submission to his suzerain, agreed to restore the Turkish fleet and to withdraw his troops from Syria, Adana, Crete and the Holy Cities, he should not only reinstate him as Pasha of Egypt, but should also give him an hereditary tenure to that Pashalic, according to the conditions specified in the treaty of July, though liable to forfeiture by any infraction of these conditions on the part of Mehemet Ali or his successors. And the despatch continued :—

" Her Majesty's Government have reason to hope that this suggestion will meet the concurrence of the Governments of Austria, Prussia and Russia ; and your Excellency will accordingly take the steps pointed out in this despatch, as soon as your colleagues shall have received corresponding instructions.

" If the Sultan should consent to act upon this advice, tendered to him by his four Allies, it would be expedient that he should take immediate steps for making his gracious intentions, in this respect, known to Mehemet Ali ; and your Excellency and Sir Robert Stopford should afford every facility which they may require for this purpose."*

* These instructions would appear to have been sent by Palmerston very much against the grain, for on October 12 Melbourne had written to Queen Victoria : " We shall be glad to see the matter settled, leaving Mehemet Ali in possession of Egypt. Palmerston has both the will and the hope of getting him out of Egypt, as well as Syria." The French Government and the French Press had, however, assumed a very warlike tone at the prospect of Mehemet Ali being deprived of Egypt, and, though Palmerston refused to believe that France would proceed to extremities, his colleagues did not share his view of the matter, and eventually he gave way.

Napier, who, as may be gathered from the letter to Palmerston which he had written before leaving Beyrout, was already itching to try his hand at negotiation, had no sooner cast his eye over this despatch, than he at once determined to forestall the official diplomatists and act in accordance with its recommendations.

The explanation which he offers for taking upon himself the rôle of negotiator, without instructions, without authority, without even consulting the Admiral, who was not forty-eight hours distant, is the extremely precarious situation of the Allies in Syria, which made the conclusion of an arrangement with Mehemet Ali a matter of the greatest urgency, and his fear lest Lord Ponsonby, who was violently prejudiced against the Pasha, and " had endeavoured to hurry the Porte into measures which it had no power to carry into effect, at the imminent risk of war with France," might prolong the negotiations until all the fruits of the victories in Syria were lost.

" We had met," he writes, " with great success, more than we had the least right to expect, and, notwithstanding the menaces of France, a European war had as yet been avoided. I knew it was the intention of the Commander-in-Chief to leave the coast and also shortly to recall the squadron from Alexandria. Ibrahim had collected his troops at Damascus, Zochlé and Malaka, and they could not have consisted of less than 60,000 men. He had the reputation of being a great general, and the talents of Souleyman were undoubted ; he had met with undoubted success in all his campaigns, except the last ; and it was natural to expect he would seize the first opportunity of wiping out the stain on his military reputation. He must have known that the mountaineers were badly provisioned and unsupported by a regular force, and that the Turkish troops were scattered in various garrisons, and, as the season advanced, would be unsupported by the British fleet. I gave Ibrahim credit for attempting to do the same, as I should have done in similar circumstances, and I determined to take the responsibility on myself and at once open communication with Mehemet Ali."*

It happened that Captain Maunsell, who commanded the *Rodney*, was an old acquaintance of the Pasha. Napier decided to invest him with the office of negotiator, and next morning sent him, under a flag of truce, to Alexandria, with a letter to Boghos Bey, the Minister and chief adviser of Mehemet Ali. In this letter he strongly urged the Pasha to set at liberty the Syrian

* " The War in Syria."

emirs and sheiks who were prisoners in his hands, to evacuate Syria, and to restore the Turkish fleet, pointing out the hopelessness of preserving his dominions, unless he came to an arrangement with the Sultan, supported as the latter was by the Allies, who, however, in case of his immediate submission, were well disposed to secure for him the hereditary Pashalic of Egypt.

The answer which the Commodore received was a very encouraging one, Boghos stating that his master was already aware of the intention to invest him with the hereditary Pashalic, and only awaited an official communication to that effect; and that he had no desire to place himself in opposition to the will of the Great Powers of Europe, who, he felt convinced, would do him justice. He further declared that it had never been Mehemet's intention to retain possession of the Ottoman fleet, [redacted] as a temporary measure, and that he was prepared to [redacted]yria, and concluded by expressing a hope that the [redacted]ore would recognize, "in the eagerness which he had shown to reply with frankness to his friendly communication, a fresh proof of the pacific and conciliatory feelings which had never ceased to animate the Viceroy, his master."

This answer appeared so satisfactory to Napier that, to save time, he decided on a personal interview with Mehemet Ali. Meanwhile, Captain Maunsell was despatched with a second letter, in which the Commodore pressed for the immediate surrender of the Turkish fleet as the first step in the proposed arrangement. The reply was to the effect that the Ottoman fleet should be restored and Syria evacuated, so soon as the Pasha received the official and positive guarantee of the advantage that he was to receive in return for these concessions; and on the 25th, Napier entered the harbour of Alexandria in the *Medea*, landed and proceeded to the house of the British Consul, Mr. Larking, to await his interview with Mehemet Ali, which had been fixed for the following day.

In the afternoon he walked about the town, where he observed "much satisfaction in the countenances of the inhabitants of all nations and all religions at being released from the apprehension they entertained of having their town knocked about their ears." He was permitted to visit the dockyard and arsenal, and was much struck with what he saw there.

"The naval establishments of the Pasha are wonderful," he writes, "and whatever may be said against Mehemet Ali, it must be admitted that no man of ordinary abilities could in so short a time have accomplished what he has done. I am not sure that the means employed were justifiable, but judging him by an Oriental standard, which is the only fair way of judging him, he must be considered an astonishing man. In less than twenty years he has created an army and a navy and a dockyard that would do credit to any nation; he has constructed nine or ten sail-of-the-line, and some of them very fine ships; he has made officers and sailors of his Arabs, and has instilled some of his own activity into the minds of the indolent Turks in his service."*

At noon on the 26th, he proceeded to the Pasha's palace, accompanied by the British Consul, Captain Maxwell and other officers. A battalion of Egyptian troops was drawn up in the courtyard of the palace, and presented arms, the band playing martial airs.

"On entering the reception-room of Mehemet Ali, which is [redacted] palace," continues Napier, "we were most graciously re[redacted] Pasha, in a short dress, was standing surrounded by his officers; free admission seems to have been given to Franks of all descriptions. After a few compliments on both sides, the Pasha walked to a corner of the room and seated himself on his divan. Pipes and coffee were called for, and we smoked away for a considerable time, as if we had been the best friends in the world. The palace was too crowded to enter into business, and it was arranged that I should see the Pasha in the evening, and give him, in writing, the terms I wished him to comply with.

"The Pasha is a man of low stature, a good deal marked with the small-pox, his complexion sallow, his eyes quick and penetrating. He wears a fine white beard, and when in good humour, has a most fascinating manner; but when out of temper, his eyes sparkle, he raises himself up in his corner, and soon convinces you he is much easier led than driven. He is easy of access, and, indeed, fond of gossiping, and seems to be informed of everything that is either said or done in Alexandria. He has many friends amongst the Franks; and when he takes a liking, the man's fortune is made. He has built a very handsome palace, and furnished it with taste. Opposite the palace is the harem, where his wives reside; but the old gentleman has given up his visits to that establishment."

After leaving the Pasha, Napier had an interview with the Bey, and settled with him the terms of the Convention, which was submitted to Mehemet Ali that evening, and, after some discussion, agreed upon.

Lieutenant Elliot, in his journal, gives some interesting parti-

* "The War in Syria."

culars of the interview between the Pasha and the Commodore, which he had from his messmate, Lieutenant Bradley, who attended as Napier's aide-de-camp and secretary :—

"The Pasha asked the Commodore for his credentials to act in such an affair; to which the other replied that the double-shotted guns of the *Powerful*, with the squadron under his command to back him, his honour as an Englishman, and the knowledge he had of the desire of the four Great Powers for peace, were all the credentials he possessed. This answer so pleased the old fellow, that he was delighted with him, said that he had many times heard of the Commodore, and was always the more anxious for his acquaintance, and would at any time prefer being the friend than the foe of such a man. They were from that moment friends; and the Commodore, with much ingenuity, induced him to comply with the terms he proposed. Most of the foreign consuls were present, and the French one, who is an intriguing fellow and a great adviser of the Pasha, attempted to give a false interpretation to some of the demands. On this being discovered, he was ordered to leave the presence; the Pasha adding that he had already been deceived enough and wished to have nothing further to do with him."

[redacted]ame day Napier wrote to Lord Minto :—

"H.M. Steamer '*Medea*,' Alexandria,
"November 26, 1840.

[redacted]o not know whether I have done right in settling the [redacted] have observed, both by your lordship's and Lord [redacted]dence, the anxious desire of the British Govern- [redacted]he war in the East, and six sail-of-the-line have [redacted]. The season is so far advanced, and the Turkish [redacted]pared for a march, that I thought it best to [redacted]ist to the chapter of accidents. I know what [redacted]ould be impossible to have got them in a fit [redacted]ahim, had he been allowed time to concen- [redacted]d at Zachkle, it would have been another [redacted]amasçus, and cannot have less than 20,000 [redacted]y and horse artillery. The Turks have neither [redacted]l the commissariat . . .

[redacted]k off, having received a message from the Pasha [redacted]n happy to tell your lordship that everything is [redacted]sfaction. Syria is to be evacuated *immediately*; [redacted]anged and signed to-night, agreeable to the demand [redacted]ut as the *Oriental* has already been detained three [redacted]like to detain her another. I shall probably send a [redacted]ith the Convention. If I have done wrong, I must bear [redacted]me. The French are in a rage, and Boghos Bey quite [redacted]t everything is settled without their intervention.

[redacted]ve the honour to remain, your lordship's obedient Servant,
"CHARLES NAPIER."

And to his wife he wrote :—

"'*Medea*' Steamer, Alexandria,
"November 26, 1840.

"You have seen me a Lord High Admiral, a Commodore and a General —I have now turned a 'Negotiator,' and have made peace with Mehemet Ali. Heaven knows whether the Government will approve or not of what I have done—but I know I am right. He has agreed to evacuate Syria immediately and give up the fleet, the moment he is guaranteed the hereditary government of Egypt. The French have done all they could to prevent Mehemet Ali agreeing to my terms, but I have beat them all. I left Edward at Beyrout.* I gave him two horses, but my treaty will put an end to the war, and they will all curse me thoroughly. I got a letter from him yesterday; all well. . . . I am just going to see the Pasha, and will finish this when I come back. I have received a letter from Sir William Parker, informing me that Charley is appointed to the *Pelican*. He is now sure of being posted either before or at the expiration of the three years.

"I am just come from the Pasha and his Minister. I was most graciously received, and I am to see him this evening, when everything will be signed. I shall either be hung by the Government or made a bish[illegible] God bless you all! I have not time for another word."

Next day (November 27) the following Convention by Boghos Bey and Napier :—

"Convention between Commodore Napier, com[illegible] Majesty's naval forces before Alexandria, on [illegible] Excellency Boghos Joussouf Bey, specially au[illegible] the Viceroy of Egypt, on the other part— 27th of November, 1840 :

"ART. I.—Commodore Napier, in his[illegible] having brought to the knowledge of His H[illegible] Allied Powers had recommended the Subl[illegible] the hereditary government of Egypt, and [illegible] communication a favourable occasion for putt[illegible] of war, he engages to order his son, Ibrahim Pas[illegible] to the evacuation of Syria. His Highness enga[illegible] the Ottoman fleet, as soon as he shall have receive[illegible] that the Sublime Porte grants to him the hereditary [illegible] which concession is, and remains, guaranteed by th[illegible]

"ART. II.—Commodore Napier will place a stea[illegible] of the Egyptian Government, which will convey to Syria [illegible] by His Highness to carry to the Commander-in-Chief [illegible] army the order to evacuate Syria. The Commander-in-Chie[illegible]

* His elder step-son, Major Ekers Napier. He had recently been se[illegible] Syria, with the local rank of lieutenant-colonel and assistant-adjutant-genera[illegible]

forces, Sir Robert Stopford, will, on his side, appoint an officer to watch over the execution of this measure.

"ART. III.—In consideration of what precedes, Commodore Napier engages to suspend hostilities on the part of the British forces against Alexandria, or any other portion of the Egyptian territory. He will, at the same time, authorize the free passage of the vessels appointed for the transport of the wounded, the invalids, or of any other portion of the Egyptian army which the Government of Egypt might wish to return to that country by sea.

"ART. IV.—It is well understood that the Egyptian army shall have the liberty of retiring from Syria with its artillery, army, horses, ammunition, baggage, and in general everything that constitutes the stores of an army.

"Done in duplicate, each contracting party to have an original.

"(Signed) CH. NAPIER, Commodore.

"BOGHOS JOUSSOUF."

"Venturing on so important a measure as this Convention without authority," writes Napier, in his "War in Syria," "would only be justified by the result; but it is not without precedent. Sir Sidney Smith had entered into a convention with the French for the evacuation of Egypt; and Captain Foote had also, when serving under Lord Nelson, entered into one for the evacuation of Naples. Both were rejected by their superior officers. The rejection of the first led to the expedition to Egypt, which cost some millions and the loss of much life; the rejection of the last led to scenes that are best buried in oblivion."

The Convention was signed only just in time, for on the 29th a violent gale came on, which blew the blockading squadron off the coast, and obliged it to take refuge in Marmorice Bay; where it was presently joined by the *Princess Charlotte* and the *Bellerophon* from Beyrout. The latter had had a narrow escape from going ashore on the coast of Latakia, being saved by a miraculous shift of wind; and the *Pique* had been obliged to cut away her masts to prevent her going on shore at Caiffa. In fact, all the British and Austrian ships had been obliged to quit the Syrian coast, with the result that all the places recently captured were left quite unprotected and might easily have been reoccupied by the Egyptians, had they possessed sufficient enterprise to make the attempt.

Having safely weathered one storm, the Commodore had to contend with another. For the Convention was promptly repudiated by Stopford, who wrote to that effect both to Napier and the Pasha; the Porte protested against it as unauthorized, and the several Ministers of the Allied Powers at Constantinople declared it null and void. Lord Ponsonby was particularly angry and wrote Napier a rather intemperate letter, under date December 7, in which, after informing him of the decision of himself and his colleagues, he continues :—

"It is my duty to call upon you to abstain from every attempt to carry your Convention into execution, in any degree whatever, and to state that you are bound by your duty to Her Majesty to continue to act with the ships under your command, as you did act before you assumed the right to make the aforesaid Convention, and as you would have acted if that Convention had never been made by you."*

Napier, as we might expect, let his Excellency have it pretty hot in reply :—

"I beg, at the same time, to observe that it appears to me that your lordship has assumed a tone in the latter part of your letter that you are by no means authorized to do. I know my duty to Her Majesty full as well as your lordship, and I have always done it, and it is the Commander-in-Chief alone who has the right to point out to me how I am to act, and, I trust, should your lordship have any further occasion to address me, it will be done in a different style."

Some of his brother-officers would also appear to have condemned his action, though rather as a breach of service etiquette than from a political point of view. Thus, we find Captain (afterwards Sir Henry) Codrington writing to his father as follows :—

"You will long ago have heard of the Commodore's Convention. Wild as I thought him, I never could have supposed he would so far have forgotten what was due to his Commander-in-Chief as to make a convention of this importance without any orders or authority whatever, and absolutely conclude and send it off to England without the least

* This official letter was, however, accompanied by a private missive, in which the Ambassador wrote :—

"You will receive from me with this a public letter, in which I express my entire dissent from your proceeding in the affair of the Convention, and deny your authority to meddle with the matter. I feel great pain in doing this, but I cannot, on account of personal esteem for any man, and admiration for his great qualities, fail to do my duty."

communication with his Admiral, within two days' steamer of him (and he had steamers with him). The Admiral, General [Sir Charles Smith,] and everybody have protested against it. The Admiral has now got the Commodore safe in Marmorice, and, I conclude, will keep him fast now that he has him. I know that he has written to the Admiralty, complaining of the Commodore for doing it."*

However, in the midst of all this hostile criticism, a communication was received by the Commander-in-Chief, informing him that on November 14 the four Powers had come to a decision to recommend the Sultan to reinstate Mehemet Ali in his functions as Pasha of Egypt, and also to grant him the hereditary investiture of the Pashalic on almost precisely the same terms as those stipulated in Napier's Convention. At the same time, Napier received the following very gratifying letter from Lord Palmerston :—

"F. O., November 14, 1840.

"My dear Sir,—I cannot let these despatches go without writing two lines to thank you most cordially for your brilliant exploits, which have produced the most important results. I wish you had been allowed to attack Acre ; I have no doubt you would have taken it ; but perhaps our instructions upon that subject, received since the date of our last accounts from Syria, may have arrived in time to allow of the attempt being made. The late debates in the committee of the French Chambers, and especially the speech of M. Remusat, a member of Mons. Thiers' Government, show very plainly what the French meant, and that they intended to make Mehemet Ali into an independent sovereign, possessing a considerable naval power. "Yours sincerely,

"Palmerston."

Meanwhile, the news of the capture of Acre had reached England, and on December 17 despatches were received at Marmorice Bay, announcing the honours and promotions which had been awarded the officers of the squadron in recognition of this brilliant success. Stopford was appointed Governor of Greenwich Hospital ; Napier was promoted Commodore of the first class, with a broad red pennant, and made a Knight Commander of the Bath ; while all the officers commanding ships at Acre were made Companions of the same Order, and a number of junior officers of all classes who had been present at the bombardment received promotion. Napier had the

* "Letters of Admiral Sir Henry Codrington," edited by Lady Bourchier (London, 1880).

additional satisfaction of receiving the following letter from the First Lord of the Admiralty :—

" Minto, 2nd December, 1840.

" When I last wrote, I had only learned the fact of the surrender of Acre, without knowing whether this had been voluntary or under attack. We have now the satisfaction of finding that it has fallen under the bombardment of our fleet, and that your operations on the coast have been nobly crowned, as I had ventured to anticipate, by the reduction of this celebrated fortress, the last stronghold of Mehemet Ali's usurped authority.

" I have so frequently of late had occasion to express my sense of your merit and exertions in the whole course of operations upon that coast, that I will not now trouble you with a repetition ; but I feel much pleasure in being able to congratulate you upon Her Majesty's gracious intention of conferring upon you the honour of the Knight Commandership of the Order of the Bath. I have the honour to be, Sir, yours faithfully,

" MINTO."

The next mail packet from England was anxiously awaited by Napier, and he probably felt far more nervous than he had ever done under fire, when, on January 5, 1841, the *Megæra*, with despatches from England, steamed into Marmorice Bay.

" I was aware," he writes, " she must either bring my sentence of acquittal or condemnation ; and having been already denounced by the wise men of the East, I felt it was not impossible that their opinion might have influenced the judgment of the Ministers of the West, if, unfortunately, their protests had arrived in London before my despatches from Alexandria. I had, however, taken precautions to prevent this, which fortunately succeeded, and they were left to their own calm judgment, which decided in my favour.

" I had a party dining with me that day, when numerous letters, public and private, were put into my hand by the officer of the watch. I laid them on the table, determined not to run the risk of spoiling my dinner by bad news, and not requiring good to give me an appetite. After the inward man had been well fortified, I ventured to open a letter from Lord Minto, which, to my great satisfaction, announced to me that the Government were satisfied with what I had done, with the exception of the guarantee."*

He received also letters from various members of the Government and an official one from the Admiralty, enclosing an instruction from Lord Palmerston to the Board, dated December 15, 1840, in which the Secretary for Foreign Affairs " requested

* " The War in Syria."

their lordships to convey to Commodore Napier the approval of Her Majesty's Government of the steps taken by him on this occasion, though without any instructions to that effect and on his own responsibility, to carry into execution the arrangement contemplated by the Treaty of 15th of July, and to put an end to the contest in the Levant."

With these communications was a letter from a royal personage, his old friend, the Duke of Sussex, who wrote as follows :—

"My dear Old Friend, Charley Napier,—I have this day, as acting Grand Master of the most honourable Military Order of the Bath, signed, by Her Majesty's commands, the order for your being invested a Knight Commander of that Order, as a mark of the Queen's approval of your gallant conduct and zeal in her service. No duty has ever been performed with greater pleasure on my part, and I am delighted to communicate to you this proof of the Royal favour, accompanied with my sincerest wishes and prayers for your health and happiness. I have followed you with intense interest in all your expeditions, and truly gratified am I in learning, not only of your success on every occasion, but likewise that you had come out of the fray with increased honours, and without a scratch. Indeed, the last circumstance was what interested me most, as, from my long acquaintance, I felt fully certain of the former event. Since then, I perceive you have been employed as Negotiator, in which character you have done yourself equal credit. The scene must have been a busy one, and, although the business has not lasted long, yet it appears to have been pretty sharp work. When we meet, I trust we may talk the business over, with a cigar and some toddy, when no doubt you will have much to tell me, and I shall have much to learn. As soon as the Porte agrees to the conditions which you have signed with Mehemet Ali—and of which I can have little doubt, unless some new intrigue is started—you will have little to do ; then perhaps you will give me a line, and some description of what has taken place. Should you, in the course of your expedition, be able to pick up a scimitar for me, and a Turkish long pipe, with some Turkish tubes, I will thank you to recollect an old friend.

". . . I am not well informed of what is passing in China, neither am I acquainted with Admiral Elliott's instructions, so as to form a correct opinion of what is going on ; but, comparing one thing with another, it strikes me that there is too much talking, while greater activity and some powder would settle matters more speedily, as well as satisfactorily. . . . Another Napier is wanted there, when I think the business would be as speedily settled as in Syria.

" The Duchess of Inverness desires to be most kindly remembered to you ; and I remain always, my dear old Charley, affectionately and sincerely yours,

" Augustus."

" Wimbledon Park, December 17, 1840."

On the following day, in consequence of instructions which Stopford had received by the *Megæra*, Sir Charles Napier—as the Commodore had now become—was directed to proceed to Alexandria in the *Carysfort*, for the purpose of seeing his Convention duly carried out, more particularly the terms that related to the restoration of the Turkish fleet and the evacuation of Syria. He was well received by Mehemet Ali, and while the Turkish fleet was being got ready for sea, he took the opportunity of visiting everything worth seeing at Alexandria, and in making himself acquainted with the trade, produce and commercial resources of the land of the Pharaohs. As the result of his inquiries, he decided to crown his naval, military and diplomatic successes by a commercial one, and obtained from the Pasha that the commercial treaty of 1839 with Great Britain, which had been left in abeyance, should forthwith be carried into effect. He also, at the request of the merchants of Alexandria, persuaded Mehemet Ali to fix the price of his cotton crop, which he had hitherto declined to do.

On January 22, we find Napier writing triumphantly to his friend, William Grant, at Portsmouth :—

" The weather has been fine, and all the fleet are gone. This finishes a question that has well-nigh set Europe in a blaze. Begun by me on the 10th of September at D'jounie—and finished by me on the 22nd of January at Alexandria."

He was a little premature, for the question was not yet finished, and some trouble subsequently arose, owing to the bad faith of the Porte, who made an unworthy endeavour to defraud Mehemet Ali of the hereditary Pashalic, and the failure of the latter to send back all the Syrian troops to their own country. It was not, indeed, until July 13 of that year that the Treaty of London, to which France gave her adhesion, finally settled the troubled affairs of the Levant.

Before concluding this chapter, we cannot refrain from quoting an amusing, if somewhat highly-coloured, portrait of Napier which Lieutenant Elliot drew in his journal, and from which it will be gathered that the sartorial eccentricities for which the victor of Sidon and Boharsef had been noted in his younger days were still as marked as ever :—

" I was much pleased with the paragraph in the *Kelso Mail* about the Commodore, and showed it to him. He laughed much, and modestly said it was not all true; but it was, in fact, very much so—the account of the peculiarities of his figure quite so. The idea you must have formed of his stoutness, from G. Morrell saying he was too heavy to ride a steeple-chase, must be erroneous, for he is by no means a great weight, perhaps fourteen stone, about my own weight, but stouter and broader built; stoops from a wound in his neck, walks lame from another in his leg, turns out one of his feet, and has a most slouching, slovenly gait, a large round face, with black, bushy eyebrows, a double chin, scraggy, grey, uncurled whiskers and thin hair; wears a superfluity of shirt collar, and a small neck-handkerchief, always bedaubed with snuff, which he takes in immense quantities; usually has his trousers far too short, and wears the ugliest pair of old shoes he can find; and altogether takes so little pride in his dress, that I believe you might substitute a green or black coat for his uniform one, without his being a bit the wiser; still, he makes all of us conform to strict uniform.

" This is a correct portrait of him, but, mind, you are not to laugh at him, for I do think he is one of the greatest characters of the day, and many is the person that has come on board just to have a sight of such a rum old fellow. He is by no means a pleasant officer to serve under, but one must forgive much for the honour of being commanded by such a character. His high, honourable principles and gentlemanly feelings are beyond dispute; yet he is snappish and irritable at times; but shines particularly at the head of his own table, which is always well found, and no want of wine. . . .

" You know, of course, better than I do, by the newspapers, of Sir Charles Napier's being sent down to Alexandria to see the conditions of his own treaty ratified; that treaty for which some of his enemies would have it that he should be at least hanged, drawn and quartered for ever attempting to meddle with. What a complete victory he has gained over them! Lord Ponsonby to boot! with whom he had some angry correspondence about it; but he cares not a straw for any superior, as long as he conceives he is doing the best for his country—and no one knows better than himself when he is right or wrong. He is a fine fellow, and I will stick up for him against all the world. . . ."

CHAPTER XVIII

ENGLAND AGAIN—IN PARLIAMENT

IN the first week of March, 1841, Napier left Egypt and rejoined the *Powerful* in Marmorice Bay, where he received orders to proceed to Malta. Here he obtained a month's leave of absence, for the purpose of proceeding home on private affairs, and at the end of March he sailed for England in the steamer *Oriental.* On April 11 he arrived at Falmouth, whence he writes to Lady Napier :—

" We are this moment arrived here, and they will not let me land. We sail to-morrow for Liverpool, to ride out our quarantine ; how long it will be I know not. I have twenty-eight days leave of absence ; write to me to Liverpool immediately, and let me know how you all are. I hope *Pelican** has not sailed, and that my dear Fanny† is well. God bless you all ! "

Three days later he writes from Liverpool :—

" Liverpool, April 14, 1841.

" Here I am, my dearest Eliza, safely arrived at Liverpool, and in quarantine for four or five days ; but it is not yet decided, nor shall we know till we are released. I saw the *Naval and Military Gazette,* and I am glad to find *Pelican* is still at Spithead, and I suppose will remain there for the present. I hope I shall have good accounts of Fanny ; I expect a letter this evening. I have sent you one and Georgie one from Edward. . . . I am glad to find the papers are on my side with respect to Mehemet Ali.

" As soon as we are out of quarantine, I will let you know what day you may expect me. I long to see you all, but I shall arrive too soon for the green fields and the trees, which are not yet, I should think, beginning to bud. Sir William Parker, I see, goes to India. I offered to go, but, as the China business is settled, I am glad I did not. God bless you all !

* The *Pelican* brig, to the command of which his younger stepson, Charles Elers Napier, had recently been appointed.

† His daughter, afterwards Mrs. Jodrell.

I forgot to say that I have received decorations from Russia, Austria and Prussia—all humbug."*

At the beginning of February Napier had received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament for his services in Syria, on which occasion Lord Minto and Lord John Russell, the movers of the resolution in the Lords and Commons respectively, had referred to him in the most flattering terms. The Press had also done full justice to his achievements, and, on his arrival in England, he found himself a popular hero.†

At Liverpool and Manchester he was cheered by crowds and entertained at civic banquets. He was presented with the freedom of the City of London, and was invited by the Liberals of both Marylebone and Falmouth to stand for Parliament at the approaching General Election. Within a couple of days of his leave expiring, he applied to Lord Minto for an extension. "It takes time," he writes, "to make inquiries before pledging oneself." The First Lord, perhaps not over eager to see so persistent a critic of the Admiralty in the House of Commons, replied that "he did not think they [the Admiralty] would be justified in retaining an officer on full pay, on the ground of any political views that might be open to him." Upon which Napier requested to be placed on half-pay. This was done, and at the General Election he stood as one of the Liberal candidates for Marylebone, in conjunction with Sir Benjamin Hall, a South Wales magnate and a gentleman of considerable experience in this *métier*, since in ten years he had been twice returned to Parliament, once defeated, once unseated on petition, and once unsuccessfully petitioned against. On this occasion, Sir

* The Order of Maria Theresa of Austria, of St. George of Russia, and the Red Eagle of Prussia. From the Sultan he subsequently received a diamond-hilted sword and the First Class of the Medjidieh, with a diamond star.

† "The public of this country had taken but little interest in the controversy about Egypt, at least until it seemed likely to involve England in a war with France. Some of the episodes of the war were, indeed, looked upon with a certain satisfaction by people here. The bravery of Charles Napier, the hot-headed, self-conceited commodore, was enthusiastically extolled, and his acts of successful audacity were glorified as though they had shown the genius of a Nelson or the clever resource of a Cochrane. Not many of Napier's admirers cared a rush about the merits of the quarrel between the Porte and the Pasha. Most of them would have been just as well pleased if Napier had been fighting for the Pasha and against the Porte. Not a few were utterly ignorant as to whether he was fighting for Porte or for Pasha."—Justin McCarthy, "History of Our Own Times."

Benjamin headed the poll, while Napier secured the other seat by a large majority over the first of his Conservative opponents, the figures being :

Hall	4,661
Napier	4,587
Cabbell	3,410
Hamilton	3,383

A seat in Parliament had always been the height of Napier's ambition, chiefly because of the opportunities which it would afford him for forwarding those reforms in naval administration which he always had so much at heart. But, in accepting the invitation to stand for Marylebone, he had made it very clear that he intended to retain complete independence of action, and from this attitude he never deviated throughout his political career.

On August 19, he took his seat, and on the 25th made his maiden speech, of which he sent the following amusing account to his wife :—

" 278, Regent Street, August 25, 1841.

" I have made my maiden speech, not either so good or so long as I wished, but still it was very well received. I had it all prepared in my mind, but when I got up, I forgot the second part of it, and was, as you may suppose, in a funk, and I passed over to the second sentence, which threw out the best part of it ; and the thread gone, I was discouraged, and left out a great part I intended to say ; but still it went off very well, and I was much cheered. When I got up, nobody expected it, and they all looked at me so much, that it was quite enough to put me out of countenance ; however, the ice is broken, and I am glad I had courage to speak the first night, which few people ever attempt ; but I felt satisfied if I did not at once go at it, every day would be worse. I suppose we shall divide to-night, and the Ministry will be out to-morrow."

And two days later he writes again :—

" I am glad you like my speech. I did not feel nervous when I first got up, but after I began, I forgot what I was to say next, and was in a sad fright. . . .What I forgot, was telling the Opposition they ought to acquaint the Queen that they had got their majority by bribery and intimidation. However, I fortunately got hold of my second sentence, and then got on very well ; but all the Ministers were looking at me ; I mistook their cheers for disapprobation ; and Berkeley, who was patting me on the back, I thought was pulling me down, otherwise I should have made a longer and much better speech. When I sat down, I thought I had

failed; and though Berkeley told me I had done remarkably well, I thought it was only to comfort me; and it was not till next morning, when I read my speech, and was very much complimented, that I became satisfied with myself. Since then I hear so many ridiculous speeches, so little to the purpose, that I shall soon acquire confidence. I shall, however, take care never to speak on what I do not thoroughly understand."

During the next few years Napier was chiefly occupied with his Parliamentary duties. He was a very regular attendant at Westminster, and a frequent and effective speaker on subjects of a professional nature.

On March 4, 1842, when the Navy Estimates came before the House, he made a long and very interesting speech, which occupies nearly seven columns of Hansard. In the course of his speech he made a strong protest against the employment of aged officers, which, as it was used against him with damaging effect after the Baltic Expedition of 1854, he must have had good reason to regret :—

"With respect to the officers employed in the Navy, it was well known that a great proportion of them had attained such a great age as to render them only fit for superannuation. With respect to admirals, the greater part, if sent to sea, would require nurses to take care of them. As to rear-admirals, the case was as bad; they were nearly all upwards of seventy years of age. And although his gallant friend, who was now proceeding to the Mediterranean, and who was upwards of seventy-two years of age, might be competent to serve in time of peace, yet he thought it was a physical impossibility that he could render the same good service in the event of war. . . .

"He would now endeavour to show that the employment of old admirals had never succeeded. On going back to Rodney, he found that he was seventy years old when he fought his action, which was not considered a good one. At that time he was labouring under a fit of gout, and was consequently incapable of any great activity.

"When Lord Howe fought the action of the 1st of June, he was sixty-eight or seventy years of age, and had been three days and nights subjected to the greatest bodily fatigue and mental excitement. In that action eight or ten ships escaped under sprit-sails, when it was not renewed. Sir R. Calder was an old man, when he was engaged in action, and only two sail-of-the-line, instead of fifteen, were taken. With respect to Lord Hotham, he thought his actions had been bungling, because they were fought by an old man. With regard to Nelson, he was of opinion that the country was indebted for his gallant deeds more to his youth than his particular ability; and if all our admirals had been as young, they would have given the same account of the enemy. Lord

Nelson was an admiral when thirty-six or thirty-seven years old ; he fought the Battle of the Nile when he was thirty-nine ; the action of Copenhagen when forty-two ; and he was killed when forty-seven years old. He had the authority of Sir T. Hardy for saying that, had Nelson been sixty years old when he fought the Battle of the Nile, and sixty-six when he fought the Battle of Trafalgar, neither of these actions would have been fought in the manner they were. Lord Duncan, after commanding a mutinous fleet, attacked the enemy and gained a glorious victory. Lord Duncan was sixty-eight years old, but he proved an exception to the rule that age unfitted men for active and daring enterprises. Sir J. Saumarez was sent, when forty-two or forty-three years of age, to Gibraltar with a small squadron. He attacked the French fleet in a strong position, and was defeated. It was rather a new occurrence for a British naval officer to suffer defeat. In five days his fleet was refitted for service, and he sailed out, leaving one ship in port under repair. He fell in with a Spanish fleet of double his force. He attacked it. Two of the enemy's vessels were blown up, one was taken, and the rest beaten. This activity and success was attributable to his youth."

Although his speeches were chiefly confined to matters connected with the Navy, there were few subjects engaging the attention of Parliament in which he did not take an active interest, and towards the end of 1841 he sent a highly original suggestion to the new Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, on the question of postage :—

"Merchistoun Hall, Horndean,
"November 26, 1841.

"SIR,—It appears to me a considerable revenue might be raised by altering the postage, without giving cause of complaint to any one. I propose to stamp the coarsest paper that can be written upon with a penny stamp ; on a better sort of paper I would apply a twopenny stamp, and so on, till I got to rose-coloured paper, which might perhaps bear a sixpence. This would be a tax upon vanity, and I think productive. No gentleman would write to a lady on whitey-brown, and no lady would soil her delicate fingers by touching it ; nor do I think tradespeople would use it to their customers—it would be confined entirely to the poor.

"I can only see one objection : it would do away with the envelopes. I recommended this to Mr. Baring when I was in Syria ; I now throw it out for your consideration. It would go a good way in paying for the Brevet.

"I have the honour to remain, your most obedient Servant,
"CHARLES NAPIER."

One of the charges brought against Napier by his enemies—and, like every man who is accustomed to speak his mind, he had his full share of them—is that he constantly urged his own

claims, in right of services performed. But, though it cannot be denied that he possessed a somewhat exalted opinion of his own merits, and keenly resented any real or apparent neglect on the part of the Admiralty, he was, at the same time, equally ready to champion what he considered to be the just claims of others, particularly of those who had followed him in his adventurous career. Thus, not only do the names of Wilkinson, Pearn and his son Charles Elers Napier figure frequently in his correspondence with the Admiralty, but we find him pressing the Board to promote the assistant-surgeon of the *Powerful*, " who is a very clever man and well deserves it," and to make his secretary, a Mr. Robinson, a purser. Those then much-neglected branches of the services, the Marines and the medical officers of the Navy, found in him a warm advocate of their cause, while he was indefatigable in his endeavours to improve the lot of the British sailor, whose staunch champion he proved himself to the last moment of his life. It was, it would appear, mainly through his efforts that in 1844 the Admiralty consented that, when ships were paid off, a certain proportion of their crews were to be given employment in the dockyards.

At the end of November, 1841, Napier was appointed naval aide-de-camp to the Queen, a distinction which, however, did not carry with it any salary. In 1842, the Queen of Portugal authorized him to assume the title of " Count Napier St. Vincent," instead of that of Count Cape St. Vincent, which had been originally conferred upon him. He, however, had never used his Portuguese title in England. In 1843, his daughter Fanny Eloïse was married to the Rev. Henry Jodrell, a nephew of Sir Richard Jodrell, Bart., and in the following year, at his solicitation, Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst presented his son-in-law to the living of Gisleham, in Suffolk.

" It will give me great pleasure," writes Lord Lyndhurst, " to redeem my promise to you. I shall be most happy to present your son-in-law, Mr. Jodrell, to the living of Gisleham, on the resignation of Mr. Collier.

" It is true you are a violent party politician ; but your claims on every well-wisher of his country, and on every admirer of gallantry and talent, are irresistible."

CHAPTER XIX

IN COMMAND OF THE CHANNEL SQUADRON—THE "SECRECY AND DISCRETION" CONTROVERSY

ON November 9, 1846, Napier attained the rank of Rear-Admiral, and in the following spring he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Channel Squadron. On May 20, 1847, he assumed his command, and hoisted his flag on the *St. Vincent*, a splendid vessel, carrying 120 guns and manned by 850 men.

The Channel Squadron, at the time of his appointment, comprised, in addition to the flagship, four sail-of-the-line, the *Howe*, 120 guns, *Caledonia*, 120, *Queen*, 110, and *Vengeance*, 84, and five steam-vessels, the *Odin*, *Dragon*, *Vixen*, *Stromboli*, and the ill-fated *Avenger*. Its total armament was 590 guns, and its total complement just over 5,000 men.

The squadron did not long remain on the home station, as in August it was ordered to Lisbon. The disturbed state of Portugal, which for some time past had again been plunged in the miseries of civil war, called for the presence of a strong British naval force. Sir William Parker, with part of the Mediterranean fleet, had been stationed at Lisbon since the spring of 1847; but his presence was now required at Malta, and it was considered that Napier, from his former connection with Portugal and his personal acquaintance with prominent men there, was the officer best fitted to replace him.

Just as the squadron was putting to sea, Queen Victoria, who was then in residence at Osborne, honoured the Admiral with a visit. Her Majesty had not been expected, and consequently no preparations had been made for her reception; but she asked to be conducted over the flagship, requesting explanations of different parts of the vessels, and accompanied the fleet so far as the Nab Light.

Before leaving England, Napier wrote to Lord Palmerston,

asking the Government's permission to assume, on his arrival at Lisbon, his Portuguese title of Count Napier St. Vincent, on the ground that it would be a compliment to the Portuguese. The Minister refused in a semi-bantering letter :—

"C. G., August 24th, 1847.

"My dear Sir Charles,—I beg your pardon for not having sooner answered your letter about the Portuguese title; I have, however, communicated upon the subject with Lord John Russell* and Lord Auckland,† and we all agree that we cannot afford to lose the British Admiral, Sir Charles Napier, and to have him converted into a Portuguese Count; we cannot be parties to denationalizing one of the brightest ornaments of the British Navy.

"The case of a foreign title is different from that of foreign orders.

"Yours sincerely,

"Palmerston."

"Rear-Admiral Sir Charles Napier."

On his arrival in the Tagus, Napier found a letter awaiting him from Sir William Parker, in which he was warned that, though hostilities had ceased, peace was far from being restored, and that "he would find public affairs in a sad state—the spirit of party in the various sections running high, bitter animosities prevailing, with an empty treasury, and very few men of character disposed to undertake the responsibility and embarrassment of office." In conjunction with Sir Hamilton Seymour, the British Minister at Lisbon, Napier, who had the welfare of Portugal sincerely at heart, addressed himself to the difficult task of conciliating the contending parties. His efforts would appear to have been attended with success, since on November 28, Lord Palmerston informs him that "Sir Hamilton Seymour had repeatedly, both in his despatches and his private letters, expressed his obligation to him [Napier] for the valuable assistance he had afforded him, especially in persuading Sá de Bandeira‡ to go to the King. And on the same day he writes to Lord Auckland that "Seymour's dispatches and letters showed that Napier had been co-operating most cordially and successfully with him."

* Lord John Russell had become Prime Minister in July, 1846.

† George Eden, Earl of Auckland 1784-1849. He had become First Lord of the Admiralty on the formation of Lord John Russell's Administration in 1846. He had held the same office for a few months in 1834, and again from April to September, 1835, when he was appointed Governor-General of India.

‡ The Viscount Sá de Bandeira, who had conquered the Alemtejo for Donna Maria in 1834, was one of the Septembrist leaders.

When not occupied with these semi-diplomatic duties, the Admiral took every opportunity of increasing the efficiency of his squadron, practising the embarkation and disembarkation of the seamen and marines, organizing sham-fights on shore, and paying particular attention to gunnery, of which, on assuming the command, he had found much reason to complain; while he tested the capabilities of the different steamers by trials of every kind. In a letter dated September 17, 1847, Lord Auckland expresses great satisfaction at the "admirable manner in which he had conducted his squadron, and the great advantage he foresees, in consequence, to the service," and also at the trials he was conducting with the steamers, while some weeks later Palmerston writes to him :—

"We hear that nothing ever was more brilliant than the state of your squadron, and that it is animated by a spirit that makes it worthy of its commander. While our ships are in such good order, and we have enough of them at sea, our neighbours across the Channel will take care to keep quiet. Diplomatists and protocols are very good things, but there are no better peace-keepers than well-appointed three-deckers."

Towards the end of October, Queen Adelaide, the widowed consort of William IV., arrived in the Tagus, on her way to spend the winter at Madeira. The Queen-Dowager was received with royal honours by the British squadron, and the Admiral was invited to dine with Her Majesty, who remained a few days at Lisbon before proceeding to her destination.

About the same time, a most unpleasant incident occurred, which caused Napier great annoyance.

He was entitled, by a vote of the Cortes, to an annual pension from the Portuguese Government, in recognition of the great services he had rendered during the War of Succession. Owing to the unsatisfactory condition of the finances, this pension was then considerably in arrears, and on October 19, in the course of a leading article in the *Times* on the affairs of Portugal, it was insinuated that Napier had abused his position as Commander-in-Chief of the British squadron in the Tagus "to make good his demands as a creditor of the Portuguese Government" :—

"We cannot refrain from adverting to a circumstance which has given rise to much comment of an unpleasant nature in Lisbon, and which, if

it were true, would be extremely derogatory to the character of the British Admiral who now commands our fleet in the Tagus. It is stated that Sir Charles Napier has thought it consistent with his duty to urge upon the Portuguese Government at this time his own personal and private pecuniary claims for the services he rendered to the Liberal cause in Portugal under Dom Pedro; and if this fact be correct, it suggests the irresistible inference that a British officer has taken advantage of his command over a fine squadron of Her Majesty's ships to make good his demands as a creditor of the Portuguese Government. It is needless for us to enlarge upon the excessive impropriety of such a proceeding, which is inconsistent with the first duties of the public service, and calculated to bring discredit upon the country itself. Sir Charles Napier rendered great service to the cause of Dom Pedro, but he took that command in defiance of the law and authority of his own country, and he owed his subsequent promotion to the indulgence which his gallantry seemed to deserve. He has now been honoured with as honourable an appointment as could be desired; but it is inconceivable that the British Admiral to whom this country has entrusted the Queen's squadron in the Tagus, and a certain share in the execution of our policy in Portugal, should have used the power entrusted to him for a great public purpose to obtain satisfaction for a private claim. The subject calls for strict inquiry, and we trust the Admiralty will either give a formal contradiction to the report, or proceed to take those measures which the interests of the service and the dignity of the country imperatively require."

On Napier's attention being drawn to this article, he hastened to send an indignant disclaimer to the journal in which it had appeared :—

"I have read an article in the *Times* of the 19th ultimo, to which I have had my attention drawn. It is a most false and unjustifiable attack on me. So far from profiting by my position to obtain the arrears of my pension, I never even mentioned the subject; and when the Minister of Finance expressed his regret at it being in arrear, I begged that no favour might be shown me, and that I should be treated just as the Portuguese were.

"My agent has received this year four months' pension, and there are now thirteen due."

On November 23, a few days after the new Parliament met,* Lord Ingestre asked the Secretary of the Admiralty, Mr. Ward, whether there was any foundation for the report that Admiral Napier had employed the influence of his position in order to obtain the arrears of salary due to him by the Portuguese Govern-

* Napier had not sought re-election.

ment. To this question Mr. Ward replied that "he was happ to say that he was in a position to lay before the House the most convincing proofs of the utter groundlessness of the report to which the noble lord had alluded." And he proceeded to read to the House a letter from Sir Hamilton Seymour to the Prime Minister, which ran as follows :—

"My Lord,—As reports to the prejudice of the gallant Admiral, Sir C. Napier, have been inserted in some of the English newspapers, I am induced to trouble your lordship with the following statement. Upon the arrival of the gallant Admiral at Lisbon, the Finance Minister expressed his regret that he was unable to pay him the arrears of his pension due to him, adding at the same time that he should make an effort to do so as soon as possible. The answer of Sir C. Napier was to this effect: 'That he had no wish to be paid before his companions, and that he would take his chance with the rest.' Sir C. Napier now acquaints me that four months' pension, out of the fifteen months then due, has been paid to him, and this amount only has been received. He further acquaints me that, two months having elapsed since that part payment was made, thirteen months' payments are at the present moment due to him. The gallant Admiral is thus placed in the same position as every other person who has claims for pensions upon the Portuguese Government; he has not, therefore, abused the influence which his present position has given him. I do not hesitate to say that I should regret as a public calamity the occurrence of anything on the part of the gallant Admiral which should interrupt the great service he is now rendering to the country by the performance of his duties at the post to which he has been sent by the Government of this country. The services which he is thus rendering are of great value, and will, I doubt not, be of great service to the country."

On the 26th Lord Auckland wrote to Napier :—

"You will see by the newspapers that a question with regard to the receipt of your pension has been asked in the House of Commons; that the letter of Sir Hamilton Seymour has been read upon it; and that there is probably an end to this exaggerated and misrepresented affair. I believe that all are satisfied, and I need not tell you that I am greatly pleased to think that you are not injured in the opinion of your countrymen at home, and that your position at Lisbon will not be impaired by the malignity of the attack which has been made upon you."

Meanwhile, a fresh accusation had been launched against Napier, namely, that he was interfering in a party spirit in the political differences at Lisbon. The only foundation for this charge appears to have been the purely accidental circumstance

CAPTAIN CHARLES ELERS NAPIER, R.N.

[To face p. 234.

H.M.S. "ST. VINCENT," 120 GUNS.
On her passage from Lisbon to Gibraltar, January 30, 1849.

[See p. 228.]

[To face p. 213.

of Costa Cabral* having been on board the flagship at the time the Admiral was honoured by the visit of Queen Adelaide; and there can be no doubt that Napier had studiously refrained from identifying himself with the interests of any party.

On this matter Lord Auckland wrote to him :—

"I beg you to forget what is passed; to hold the natural tenor of your way; to bear in mind—as you have done—your instructions; and to be on terms of hospitality and good-fellowship with all parties."

And he adds :—

"I can only assure you that I look with pride and satisfaction at the manner in which you have fulfilled the objects of your command."

At the end of the year, a terrible sorrow befell the Admiral and his family. Charles Elers Napier, the gallant young sailor who had played such an heroic part in the capture of the Miguelite *Rainha* in the action off Cape St. Vincent, and whose advancement in the service his stepfather had always had so much at heart, had in 1841 been appointed to the command of the *Pelican* brig, which was shortly afterwards ordered to China. Promoted post-captain before the end of the war, and consequently superseded in his command, he joined the land forces as a volunteer, and subsequently acted as aide-de-camp to Sir William Parker, and, in company with that gallant veteran, scaled the walls of Ching-Kang-Foo, at the storming of that place. On his return to England, he applied himself to the study of steam, and having become duly qualified in that science, was offered the command of a fine steam-frigate. But his mother, Lady Napier, being at that time in delicate health, he deemed it his duty to devote himself to her, as the Admiral was too much occupied with his Parliamentary duties to be much at home; and very nobly relinquished his prospects of professional advancement. However, in November, 1847, Lady Napier being now in better health, Lord Auckland, at the Admiral's solicitation, appointed him to the command of the *Avenger*, one of the steam-vessels then with Napier's squadron in the Tagus, Captain Dacres,

* Antonio Bermudo da Costa Cabral, a radical who had turned royalist, and been created Count of Thomar, was Home Secretary and virtual Prime Minister of Portugal from 1842 to 1845. He again came into office in 1849, but in 1851 was expelled by Saldanha at the head of his troops.

who commanded her, being transferred to the *St. Vincent*, as flag-captain to the Commander-in-Chief. Shortly after Captain Elers Napier joined his ship, she was ordered to proceed to Malta, to reinforce the Mediterranean squadron; but on her way thither, in the night of December 20–21, during a terrific gale, she ran on the Sorrelle rocks, near the island of Galita, and was lost, with all on board, with the exception of an officer and two or three men, who succeeded in reaching the African coast, near Tunis.

The Admiral, who was as deeply attached to Captain Napier as if he had been his own son, was overwhelmed with grief when he received the sad news. It reached him when he was entertaining a large party to dinner. He immediately retired, and kept his room for a week, when important business obliged him to appear in public again. To his daughter, Mrs. Jodrell, he wrote :—

"My dearest Child,—I hope this letter will find you a little reconciled to the dreadful misfortune that has happened to you and all of us. If you can write to me at all composedly, do it by next packet; but I dread to hear from you unless you can compose yourself. I heard from Jodrell and Lizzy by the last packet, and I can conceive the affliction they are all in. I am glad your mother is with Edward. I am sure he will do all he can to console her in her dreadful misfortune. My friends here have all expressed their great grief, and have all called on me."

The Admiral received many letters from all quarters condoling with him on the loss of his stepson. Amongst those who sent messages of sympathy were Queen Adelaide and the King and Queen of Portugal.

Early in 1848, the threatening aspect of affairs in Ireland caused Napier's squadron to be recalled from Lisbon, and ordered to the Cove of Cork, where it arrived on March 23, after a stormy passage. Here it remained for some weeks, the Admiral turning the time to good account by landing the seamen and marines and organizing a number of field-days on the shores of the beautiful bay. Towards the end of May, tranquillity having been in some measure re-established in Ireland, the Channel Fleet was ordered to Spithead, where Napier appears to have spent a good deal of his time in correspondence with Lord Auckland in reference to various reforms which he desired to see carried out

in the Navy. The First Lord, who appreciated the blunt old sailor's honesty of purpose, was generally sympathetic, and in a letter dated June 9, 1848, begs Napier to write to him "freely and without reserve"; indeed, all their correspondence is characterized by a most friendly and cordial tone. Unhappily, Lord Auckland's death at the beginning of 1849 prevented them co-operating together for the improvement of the service whose welfare they both had so much at heart.

Towards the end of July, fresh disturbances being expected in Ireland, the Channel Fleet was again ordered thither, and on the 25th was once more at anchor in the Cove of Cork. There seems to have been good reason for the alarm which then prevailed amongst the authorities in the "distressful country," and Napier was warned that large supplies of arms and ammunition had been imported, and that infernal machines had been prepared for use against the fleet. The threatened storm, however, blew over, and at the beginning of November the squadron returned to Spithead.

It had been proposed to send the Channel Fleet on a winter cruise to Lisbon, Gibraltar and Madeira; but an incident which had just occurred on the Barbary coast caused its destination to be changed. On November 2, a British merchant ship, the *Three Sisters*, which had been becalmed off Cape Tres Forcas, was captured and run ashore by the Riff pirates, who from time immemorial had been in the habit of perpetrating similar outrages on the flags of all nations, generally with complete impunity, since the impracticable nature of the coast rendered it exceedingly difficult to inflict upon them the punishment they so well deserved, and their nominal sovereign, the Sultan of Morocco, disclaimed all responsibility, on the plea that it was quite beyond his power to control them. The *Polyphemus* steamer, from the Mediterranean squadron, happening to be at Gibraltar at the time, proceeded to the scene of the outrage and succeeded in recapturing the *Three Sisters* and getting her off, though not before a lieutenant and three seamen had been wounded by the pirates, who fired at them from behind the shelter of the rocks.

This outrage, following on the seizure of another British steamer, the *Ruth*, two years before, decided the Government to make an attempt to punish the Riff tribes; while it was also

determined to secure, at the same time, reparation from the Sultan of Morocco for the losses which British merchants had sustained from the infraction of the commercial treaty with England.

For this twofold purpose, therefore, Napier was ordered to the Mediterranean. His instructions with regard to the commercial part of his mission were " to send a steamer to Mogador, with such just demands as might be determined upon, and with an intimation that he had a strong force to insist upon a compliance with these demands in such manner as might be necessary ; and to see what came of this."* As to the Riff tribes, he was " to take the measures he deemed best for chastising the pirates, but not to undertake it, unless he considered the means at his disposal sufficient for the same." In other words, he was left to act according to circumstances.

South-westerly gales delayed the departure of the squadron from Spithead until the middle of December; and it was not until January 4, 1849 that it reached Lisbon. While there, he received news that Lord Auckland had died suddenly on New Year's Day.

Napier was sincerely grieved at the death of this amiable nobleman, with whom his relations, as we have seen, had always been most cordial, and, under date January 16, 1849, writes to Captain Hamilton, of the Admiralty :—

" The death of Lord Auckland is, indeed, a heavy blow to me privately, and to the service publicly; his successor will not have an easy task to perform. He was the first Lord I was ever on such a confidential footing with, and I do not think it will ever be possible to be on such terms with another—who that other will be I have no idea. . . ."

That other was Sir Francis Baring, Napier's old opponent at Portsmouth, from whom, soon after the squadron reached Gibraltar, the Admiral received a letter written in a very friendly tone, requesting him to communicate as confidentially with him as he had been in the habit of doing with Lord Auckland, and assuring him that his conduct would always meet with favourable construction and support at home. Unfortunately, the relations between the new First Lord and the Admiral did not long continue on this friendly footing.

* Lord Auckland to Napier, November 25, 1848.

The presence of Napier's squadron to back the demands for compensation to the British merchants who had suffered through the infringement of the commercial treaty produced a salutary effect upon the Moorish Government, and, after a good deal of correspondence between them and our Consul-General at Tangier, a settlement was arrived at. The Riff business, however, was attended with much less satisfactory results.

On February 17, Napier embarked the 34th Regiment, then stationed at Gibraltar, and the marines of the *St. Vincent* and *Vanguard* in steamers, and started for Cape Tres Forcas. At daylight the following morning he ran down to the westward along the shore, until he came to the spot where the *Three Sisters* had been captured. About forty or fifty men were seen high up among the mountains, but not a soul was visible on the shore, nor was there anything for him to destroy except a couple of fishing-boats and a few miserable huts. He continued in a westerly direction, with the same result, and then went in the *Sidon* to Melilla, to question the Spanish governor of that place. From what he was told there, it appeared that the Moors had decamped inland, dragging their boats after them; that in a couple of days they could collect 8,000 to 10,000 men, and that it would be useless to attempt to pursue them, unless he were prepared to employ a large body of troops and to engage in a regular campaign amongst the mountains, where all the advantages would be on the side of the enemy, who were admirable marksmen and accustomed to clamber like goats among their rocky fastnesses.

In these circumstances, Napier prudently decided to restrain his natural inclination to punish these insolent barbarians—a decision which appears to have met with the full approval of the Admiralty, since we find Sir Francis Baring writing to him, under date March 7, 1849:—

"I have been quite satisfied with all you have done, both as regards the negotiation and the Riff business.

"Your account of the proceedings on the Riff coast is quite satisfactory, though not so successful; to do nothing proves often the greater judgment and prudence than to run risks for little good."

On April 5, the Channel Squadron returned to Spithead, and on the 9th Napier received orders to haul down his flag. A few

weeks later he was offered the command at Cork, which, however, he declined, and retired to Merchistoun, where he divided his time between country pursuits and writing on professional topics. When the Channel Squadron was reformed the following year, the Admiralty, "instead of reappointing him to the command," which, he says, "was my natural right,"* conferred the post on his late second-in-command.

Napier was greatly irritated by what he deemed a personal insult on the part of Sir Francis Baring, and his indignation gave increased bitterness to the many letters which he wrote to the *Times*—with whose editor, Delane, he was now on intimate terms—or to the Ministers, which were afterwards published in the newspapers, denouncing the policy and constitution of the Admiralty. A number of these letters, together with some of earlier date, were collected and edited by his cousin, Sir William Napier, and published in 1851. Many of the reforms which he advocated were salutary, and many of his criticisms, particularly in regard to the wasteful expenditure in the dockyards, only too just; but their tone, as will be readily understood from the following excerpts, was deeply resented in official circles:—

"Bad as the naval administration was before the Navy and Victualling Boards were abolished, it is ten times worse now. The Admiralty have taken upon themselves more duties than they can perform—hence the delays, blunders, confusion and waste; and I am quite certain, had the Navy Board, bad as it was, been in existence, they never would have permitted the wasteful extravagance that has been incurred by the various Admiralty Boards since their extinction. . . . There is no responsibility whatever; for the responsibility of six gentlemen, composing the Board of Admiralty, is not worth a straw. May I ask your lordship who is responsible for the millions of money thrown away in building an inefficient steam navy? who is responsible for the iron steam fleet that the Admiralty do not know what to do with? It was only the other day that, raising a tank and the dunnage under it, in one of these precious vessels, they found a hole in her bottom, through which the water passed, and a *fish* within it, on which, if I am not mistaken, one of their lordships breakfasted.

"Who is responsible for allowing so many ships to be built after the plan of the late Surveyor, which is now abandoned? . . . Who is responsible for carrying on the construction of some of these ships (ordered to be stopped) till too late to alter them? . . . Had the First Lord been a naval officer, the country would have fixed the responsibility on him—he could not escape; but it would be unjust to throw the blame

* Napier to Lord John Russell, September 29th, 1851.

on a civilian, who does not know whether a butcher's tray, or a washing-tub, is the best form for a man-of-war.

". . . So far are the Admiralty from reducing their patronage, they are every day grasping at more. Formerly, captains alone had the power of bringing young gentlemen into the service, a reasonable share of which went to the Admiralty. They have now seized upon the whole. . . . The captain was formerly allowed to choose his clerk, which is provided for in the printed instructions; but the Senior Naval Lord, eager for patronage, has upset the instructions and seized upon that appointment. The master's assistants have long been in his grasp, these little places being very convenient for the members for naval boroughs.

"If Pericles got a laurel crown for increasing the Athenian navy, I shall not say what the Government deserves for reducing one at the present time.

"The Admiralty costs £136,303—£4,503 goes to a First Lord, who knows nothing.

"Her Majesty has only the power of granting pensions of £1,200 a year. The First Lord of the Admiralty can grant more than that in a day in the way of promotion.

"Our dockyard people have no idea that there is either waste of time or materials in their work; all naval officers are quite aware of it, but we are told we are no judges. . . . The superintendents have too much to do; they ought to have under them, for dockyard duty only, an active captain, who should be constantly in the yard, with no office work. The superintendent ought to have the entire power of entering and discharging men when he thought proper. If he jobbed, the Admiralty could punish him; but if the Admiralty job, and they are the greatest jobbers, there is no one to punish them."

The publication of these letters, as has been said, gave great offence in official circles, and the First Lord, Sir Francis Baring, wrote to Napier, accusing him of "want of discretion," and declaring that he "had set a most unfortunate example to the naval service by attacking Her Majesty's Ministry in the newspapers." This alleged want of discretion appears to have stung the Admiral to the quick.

"How you could have formed such an opinion of me," he writes, "I am at a loss to know, for it is not to be found in the records of the Admiralty. If you examine them, you will find no proof of want of discretion in the whole of my service, which, I am proud to say, will bear comparison with that of any officer, and no one can show more scars and fewer favours. Yours was not the opinion of my esteemed friend, Lord Auckland, or of Lord Palmerston; neither was it the opinion of any one member of your Board, if there is truth in man, which the scurrilous articles in the *Morning Herald*—the organ of the Admiralty—since I hoisted my flag, sometimes makes me doubt."

"Feeling it impossible to rest under such a slur," he wrote an official letter to the Board of Admiralty, and failing to get "any satisfaction from them," appealed to Lord John Russell :—

"I now appeal to your lordship, as Prime Minister of this country, whether it is to be borne, that a First Lord of the Admiralty, and, as a civilian, necessarily ignorant of the service over which he presides, and of the character of the officers in it, should inconsiderately express a doubt of the discretion of an officer (without alleging any cause), who has performed his duty to his Queen and country zealously and faithfully in most parts of the globe, and been three times wounded in the service."

To which the Prime Minister replied :—

"8, Downing Street,
"January 25, 1850.

"SIR,—I am aware that you have published several letters, addressed to me, on the state of the Navy.

"These letters contain gross imputations on the character and motives of the late Lord Auckland and his colleagues in the Government; but I have not taken any notice of these imputations. When, however, you inform me that the First Lord of the Admiralty has disapproved of these letters, and that he has finished by telling you, 'He has a high opinion of your professional character, but doubts your discretion,' I cannot say less than that I concur in his opinion of your professional character, and share in his doubts of your discretion.

". . . Your brilliant services in 1840 on the coast of Syria evince the energy and boldness of your professional character, and will always be remembered by me.

"I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
"JOHN RUSSELL."

This letter called forth an indignant disclaimer from Napier that he had ever, "in thought, word or deed, said, or meant to say, one word against Lord Auckland or his colleagues in the Government."

"It is satisfactory to me to find, by your lordship's letter," he proceeds, "that, although you share in Sir Francis Baring's doubts of my discretion, you confine those doubts to the publication of my letters.

"Had I consulted my own interest, I certainly would not have published these letters, for I know full well they could not be acceptable to men in office."

And he concludes :

" I am obliged to your lordship for your remembrance of my services in Syria, but, after what has passed, they are not likely to be again wanted in a hurry."

At the beginning of April, 1851, Napier learned that there was a probability that Sir William Parker would shortly resign the Mediterranean command, upon which, notwithstanding the opinion that he had lately expressed that " his services were not likely to be again wanted in a hurry," he wrote to Lord John Russell the following curious letter :—

" 18, Albemarle Street,
" April 11.

" My Lord,—You finished your not very pleasant letter on the 25th of January, 1850, by stating, ' Your brilliant services on the coast of Syria evince the energy and boldness of your professional character and will always be remembered by me.' Now, my lord, as it is to be presumed that Sir William Parker is not to remain in the Mediterranean all his life, your lordship has an opportunity of rewarding my ' brilliant services.' The appointment to the Mediterranean command is, I believe, a Cabinet question, or, at all events, it is not made without the concurrence of the First Minister of the Crown and Lord Palmerston. I therefore request your lordship to take my services into consideration, and I venture to say they have not been surpassed by any admiral in the Navy List.

" Your lordship is no doubt aware, had I not displayed the ' energy and boldness ' you have thought proper to compliment me upon, then the probability is this country would have been involved in war and our foreign policy overthrown. The time may again come when an experienced and an energetic officer may be wanted in the Mediterranean, and I feel neither my health or energies as yet impaired. Sir Francis Baring thought proper to tell me that he doubted my discretion—not a very complimentary opinion to be given by a First Lord of the Admiralty to an officer of my standing, but he declined to tell me on what occasion. Could it have been at any period of my service during the war ? They were approved by every Admiral and Admiralty I served under.

" Could it have been when I dethroned the usurper Miguel and put a constitutional Queen on the throne of Portugal ?

" Could it have been when I upset the Grand Prince of Lebanon, the ally of Mehemet Ali, defeated his son, and drove his troops out of the mountain ?

" Could it have been when I stormed Sidon and made the garrison prisoners ?

" Could it have been when I served as second-in-command at Acre ? or could it have been when I signed a treaty with Mehemet Ali, which was approved by Lord Palmerston and all the Foreign Ministers in

London, in opposition to the Ministers of the Sultan and all the Foreign Ministers at Constantinople?

"Another word, my lord, and I have done. You disapproved of my letters. Nevertheless, they have done much good. Many of the evils I pointed out have been remedied, and if my suggestions were attended to, there would have been money enough saved in the dockyards to make it unnecessary for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to lay on a house tax.

"I have the honour to remain,

"Your lordship's obedient Servant,

"CHARLES NAPIER."

To this application Lord John replied, with a very reasonable indecision, that the post in question was not yet vacant, that he should preserve an "unfettered opinion" until it became so; and that, when the proper period arrived, he should weigh "only the merits" of the candidates for selection:—

"Downing Street, April 11.

"SIR,—I remember very well the passage in my letter of the 25th of January 1850, to which you allude. Nor have I in any way altered my opinion. The energy and decision evinced by you on the coast of Syria in 1840 were, I conceive, among the main causes of the success of the critical interference in which, with other Powers of Europe, we were then engaged.

"The Mediterranean command is not now vacant, and I do not know that it will soon be so.

"I must preserve my opinion quite unfettered till that period arrives, and I can only say at present that when Sir Francis Baring consults me on the subject, I shall weigh only the merits of the officers who may be eligible for that appointment.

"I remain, your faithful Servant,

"JOHN RUSSELL."

A few months after the interchange of these epistles, Napier learned that it was intended to confer the Mediterranean command on Rear-Admiral Dundas,* a member of the Admiralty Board, an officer whose services could not in any way compare with his own, though the appointment had not been officially announced. Upon this Napier at once wrote to the Prime Minister, recapitulating at great length his exploits, naval, military and diplomatic; claiming that his victory of Cape St. Vincent had "changed a dynasty, as well as the whole political

* James Whitley Deans Dundas (1785–1862). He must not be confused with his contemporary, Richard Saunders Dundas, who commanded the Baltic Fleet in 1855.

face of modern Europe," and that his services in Syria had prevented a war with France; complaining bitterly of his treatment by Sir Francis Baring in declining to reappoint him to the command of the Channel Squadron, and asking him to compare his services with those of Dundas, "who hardly ever saw a shot fired, and had not been actually at sea for over thirty years, with the exception of going as Sir William Parker's flag-captain to Lisbon, for a few months twenty years ago."

And he concludes:—

"My lord, I feel almost ashamed to speak of myself, but I have no interest with any party. I owe my position to my sword alone, and I cannot believe that the Prime Minister of this country, so famed for justice and straightforward conduct, will permit the services I have performed to the State to go unrewarded."

In reply, he received a curt letter from Lord John Russell, containing a distinct intimation that his want of "secrecy and discretion" had been considered by the Government as disqualifying him for the appointment in question:—

"Rhyl, October 4.

"SIR,—I have received your letter of the 29th of September, and, considering its contents, I am far from disputing the value of your services, but in making the appointment of a successor to Sir William Parker in the Mediterranean command, it will be necessary to choose an officer who will possess the full confidence of the Government, as well as of the Board of Admiralty; he must be an officer on whose secrecy and discretion the Queen's Ministers can fully rely. I am sorry to say that, notwithstanding your many brilliant exploits, I could not place in you that implicit confidence which is required.

"I remain, Sir, your most obedient Servant,

"JOHN RUSSELL."

In great indignation, the Admiral wrote:—

"Gedsham Rectory, October 7.

"MY LORD,—I have received your letter. Had you been as candid in your reply to my first as you are now, your lordship would have saved yourself and me some trouble.

"Your lordship's present opinion of me, and your opinion when I was serving both in Syria and the Channel, are not the same. There was no want of confidence in my 'secrecy and discretion' then. I must, therefore, conclude you are now punishing me at the suggestion of the First Lord of the Admiralty for exposing our defenceless state and wasteful expenditure. Had your lordship read the notes to my letters, you would have seen that these abuses are in a great measure corrected.

"When I was last employed, I enjoyed the entire confidence of that upright and just man Lord Auckland and his Board, which I shall, at a future time, take an opportunity of showing, and I venture to say that I also enjoyed the confidence of Lord Palmerston, and I have no doubt he will tell you so if you ask him.

"If I do not enjoy the confidence of the present Board, they must have changed their opinions, biassed no doubt by the First Lord, who took the earliest opportunity of insulting me, for reasons best known to himself.

"I shall conclude this letter by expressing my regret that 'notwithstanding my many brilliant exploits,' as you are pleased to call my services, I do not enjoy your confidence, and I hope the officer you have chosen for the Mediterranean command may (should difficulties arise) be successful and discreet enough to uphold a tottering Administration.

"I remain, your obedient Servant,

"CHARLES NAPIER."

Some two months later, Napier, not having received any reply to this letter, though he can hardly have expected one, wrote to the Prime Minister again :—

"Merchistoun, December 16.

"MY LORD,—I told you in my last letter that I should at a future time show you that I enjoyed the full confidence of Lord Auckland and his Board. I now beg to send you, not only extracts of letters from Lord Auckland, but also letters from Lords Melbourne, Minto, Palmerston, Ponsonby, Sir Francis Baring, Sir Charles Adam, Sir William Parker, Admiral Dundas and Mr. Ward, late Secretary to the Admiralty. I have also many others to the same effect, much too voluminous for your lordship's perusal. These letters will show your lordship that you are not justified in the opinion you have formed of me. Indeed, my lord, I do not believe it is your opinion, but only a cloak to cover an act of injustice.

"In your first letter you told me that you should only weigh the merits of the officers eligible for the Mediterranean command. You then thought Admiral Dundas would be a vice-admiral, and you could easily throw me overboard as not being eligible; but when you decided not to wait till that time, it was necessary to find another excuse to get rid of me, and that was by telling me that I was not to be trusted.

"I don't dispute, my lord, your right to appoint to the Mediterranean command whom you please; but I dispute your right to damn my professional reputation by sending me the letter you have done.

"This is not the time, my lord, to affront an officer who has rendered some service to his Queen and country, when France, with an army of 400,000 men, is in a blaze.

"Your lordship is renowned for writing indiscreet epistles, and, as it would be a pity to withhold your last, I shall send it to the Press.

"I remain, your obedient Servant,

"CHARLES NAPIER."

And, to vindicate his own professional reputation and challenge a public verdict on the whole transaction, he forthwith sent the whole correspondence between the Prime Minister and himself, together with copies of the " testimonials " he had received from former Ministers, to the *Times*, with the accompanying letter :—

" Merchistoun, December 17.

" SIR,—I enclose you a correspondence that has taken place between Lord John Russell and myself relative to the Mediterranean command, in order that the country and the Navy may see that Ministerial and Admiralty jobbery are of more importance in the eyes of a Whig Prime Minister than either rank or (to make use of his own expression) ' brilliant exploits.' I do not dispute the right of the Prime Minister to choose whom he pleases to fill important commands, but I dispute the right of the First Lord of the Admiralty, in the first instance, and the Prime Minister, in the second, to damn the professional character of an officer by attributing to him a want of discretion, when documents at the Admiralty for fifty years prove the contrary.

" Were the Navy ruled by a professional man, he would not have dared to dishonour an officer ; that is left to Lord John Russell and Sir Francis Baring, who appear not to know what military honour is, and, thank God, I am in a position and independent enough to tell them so.

" I remain, your obedient Servant,

" CHARLES NAPIER."

The *Times* of December 19, in a very able article, adjudicated upon the question at issue, and summed up strongly in favour of Napier :—

" In expressing our own conclusions on the evidence before us, we cannot charge ourselves with the advocacy of our correspondent's original claim. It will hardly be thought that the most brilliant services can entitle an officer to write to the Prime Minister and bespeak a command, especially when the request is conveyed in terms and under circumstances decidedly not conciliatory. If Sir Charles considered Lord John's letters ' not very pleasant,' he certainly did his best to maintain the quality of the correspondence ; and if the Premier had simply contented himself with reserving his undoubted privilege of free selection, we don't see how Sir Charles could have construed into a grievance the preference of another officer to himself. But the Premier, with a sad example of ' indiscretion ' on his own part, did more than this. He first declared that in making his decision he would be guided by ' merit ' alone, and next alleged a specific demerit to the prejudice of Sir Charles' claims. We are led, therefore, to the inevitable conclusion that Lord John Russell, in conjunction with his colleagues, did ' weigh the merits ' of the aspirants to the vacant command, and did deliberately decide that Admiral Napier,

for 'want of secrecy and discretion,' was an inferior officer to Admiral Dundas.

"Of course, no disguise is attempted of the particular consideration in view. Sir Charles Napier, in common with many other Members of Parliament, had loudly protested against the excessive expenditure induced by dockyard mismanagement; and when he no longer retained a seat in the House and could obtain no attention at the Admiralty to his private representations, he addressed a series of letters to this journal, in which he enlightened the public as to the waste of their money. This appeal from the Government to the country was considered a most dangerous precedent, and it was resolved to discourage the practice of telling tales out of doors. The Government assumed the attitude of a betrayed party—of a party whose interests were opposed to those of the nation—and it was held that an officer was guilty of misdemeanour in disclosing any of those administrative malpractices which were reckoned among secrets of State. To assert, upon such undoubted knowledge as Admiral Napier possessed, that money to the amount of hundreds of thousands a year was unnecessarily squandered in our naval establishments was to create a discontented spirit among the people, to provoke an inconvenient pressure against the Ministry, and to set a very pestilent example to public servants in future.

"We shall not be expected to acquiesce in this view of public duty, or to recognize any laudable discretion to keep the country in the dark respecting the administration of its own funds. If Admiral Napier had asserted what was untrue, he might have been convicted of error, false testimony, or malice; but so far were his allegations from being thus impeached, that they received a practical illustration in the reforms instituted on such compulsion. Many of his recommendations were actually adopted, and savings in consequence effected. This proves that his suggestions were both sound and practicable, and to maintain that he was bound by any professional considerations to connive at the robbery of the public in deference to Ministerial convenience, is nothing less than to hold that the private interests of a Cabinet are superior to those of a nation. . . . Sir Charles Napier satisfied the ordinary suggestions of prudence by exerting himself to the utmost in private representations before resorting to a more imperative appeal. It was not until all his efforts failed that he applied to ourselves, nor will it, we are sure, be considered by his countrymen that the compulsory amendment which followed on the exposure should be set down to his damage by those who were thus brought to reason against their will.

"It is not, however, with this piece of Ministerial retaliation that we find the greatest fault. Governments owe grudges as well as men, and cannot be easily debarred from squaring such little accounts. If Sir Charles has to pay for public spirit by official disfavour, he would neither have been the first nor the last officer who had made such a bargain. The true injustice of the case consists in the version that has been given to his misdemeanour, by assigning to professional incapacity a slight which was in reality too due to political offences. . . . He [Lord John Russell] identifies the 'secrecy and discretion' exacted from an officer

in high command with the 'secrecy and discretion' expected from an accomplice in a job, and because Sir Charles Napier did not choose to be mute on the subject of remediable extravagance in the dockyards at home, he assumes that he cannot be trusted with the confidential execution of our policy abroad. He visits upon the professional reputation of an Admiral the offence, if such it can be called, of a private citizen, and stigmatizes as untrustworthy in a naval command a sailor who ventured to say that too much money was consumed in shipbuilding. According to this rule, no reformer ahead of the Ministry can ever possess 'the confidence of the Government,' which is necessary to make his services available. An officer, whether naval or military, must not content himself with such an exercise of 'discretion' in the discharge of his duties as Admiral Napier's testimonials abundantly substantiate in his own particular case. He must shut his eyes to abuses and must league himself with a Ministry to juggle or hoodwink the public till it is convenient to announce a reform. Failing this obsequiousness, his professional qualities will be called into question, and he will be told that 'no confidence can be placed' in his ability to command a garrison or a squadron. . . ."

The verdict of the *Times* appears to have been endorsed by the public, and thus Napier was triumphantly vindicated. But he had lost the Mediterranean command, and, with it, the opportunity, when the Crimean War broke out, of serving his country under conditions which would have afforded him far greater opportunities for distinction than those which fell to his lot.

In the spring of that year, General Sir Charles Napier, who had recently returned from India, purchased a small property, called Oaklands, not far from Merchistoun; and thus, after a long separation, these two remarkable men were able to resume the companionship of former years. They would appear to have been a good deal together, and in the soldier Charles's journal, under date July 11, 1851, there is an amusing entry about the sailor:—

"I have had fun with Black Charles: he told me to cut down some fine fir-trees, which, he said, looked like poles for monkeys; but, liking trees, I told him I would buy monkeys for the poles. Then he ridiculed my new water-tank, saying my fish would be queer ones; I said I would put him in, and he would be the queerest fish there. It is surrounded by cherry-trees, and therefore I call it pond-de-cherry."*

* Sir William Napier, "Life and Opinions of General Sir Charles Napier," vol. IV.

The conqueror of Scinde did not live long to enjoy his well-earned leisure, and it is sad to reflect that the close of that most brilliant career should have been embittered, as that of his sailor cousin was destined to be, by gross injustice. A chill caught at the funeral of the Duke of Wellington, in November, 1852, at which he had been one of the pall-bearers, developed into a fatal illness, and in the early morning of August 29, "he passed quietly away," like a soldier, on a naked camp-bedstead, the windows of the room open, and the fresh air of heaven blowing on his manly face." As the last breath escaped him, Sir William Napier tells us, his son-in-law, Major McMurdo, "with a sudden inspiration, snatched the colours of the 22nd Regiment—the colours that had been borne at Meanee and Hyderabad, and waved them over the dying hero. Thus, Charles Napier passed from this world."*

The Admiral followed his cousin to his last resting-place, in the small churchyard of the garrison chapel at Portsmouth, and on the following day wrote to his wife :—

"September 9th, 1853.

"The General was buried yesterday, and all Portsmouth were at his funeral. It was not a military one, but all the soldiers and officers, and the Navy attended; it was a pleasing thing to see such respect shown to so good and great a man. He had suffered much and long before he died; he fought a battle with the Enemy with as much courage as he always did, but was beaten at last."

Napier continued to agitate through the medium of the Press for the reform of the Navy, and it was his constant endeavour to open the eyes of his countrymen to the dangers which would confront us in the event of our being involved in a war with either France or Russia, owing to the deficiency of our naval means, and more particularly owing to the shortage of trained seamen.

"Of ships (with the exception of steamers) we have enough," he writes; "but what is the use of them without men. They are only barracks, and are of no more use for defence than if we were to build batteries all over the country without soldiers to put into them."

On May 28, 1853, he attained the rank of Vice-Admiral, and at the beginning of July he received a letter from Sir James

* Sir William Napier.

Graham, now First Lord of the Admiralty, informing him that a vice-admiral's good-service pension having become vacant by the death of Sir Charles Bullen, he considered that Napier's gallant conduct on active service gave him an "irresistible claim" to this reward, and that he had therefore great pleasure in bestowing it on him. In reply, Napier, after thanking Sir James for remembering him, and still more for the handsome manner in which he had expressed himself regarding his services, added :—

"I see the Russians have crossed the Pruth ; if my services are wanted, I am quite ready for work, both in body and mind."

It is amusing to find that, in his eagerness for an opportunity of gathering fresh laurels, he appeared to have entirely forgotten the speech which he had made in the House of Commons in 1842, in which he had condemned in the most emphatic manner the employment of aged Admirals on active service.

CHAPTER XX

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE BALTIC FLEET

IT will be remembered that, so far back as the Syrian Expedition of 1840–41, Napier, in an interesting letter to Lord Palmerston, had expressed the opinion that, owing to the aggressive foreign policy pursued by the Emperor Nicholas, a war between Great Britain and Russia was sooner or later inevitable. From that opinion he had never deviated, and even when the political horizon appeared most clear, he had refused to relax his efforts to get the Navy placed in a state of preparedness for war. These efforts, in which he had the support of some of the most able of his brother-officers, had been attended, in certain directions, with some measure of success, and we certainly possessed many magnificent ships; but there were few gunboats—an arm of the naval service in which Russia was particularly strong—a supply of ammunition altogether inadequate for operations on an extensive scale, and a lamentable lack of seamen.

As the year 1853 drew towards its close, it became evident that a rupture with Russia could not be long deferred, and on November 22, Napier received a letter from Sir James Graham, informing him that he had not overlooked his just claims for employment, but that, with reference to the impending retirement of Sir George Seymour from the North American station, he thought it as well, in present circumstances, to keep him near home, so as to be ready for any emergency, as in the course of the next six months an opportunity might present itself of offering him a vice-admiral's command.

Napier had not applied for the North American command, nor would he have accepted it, had it been offered him. He could, therefore, only conclude that the First Lord's letter was intended as a feeler, to ascertain whether he would be willing to accept the command of the Baltic Fleet in case of war; and accordingly replied as follows:—

"November 24, 1853.

"In the event of war, I conclude you intend sending me to the Baltic, and, in the event of peace, I fear you destine me for Sheerness. In the first case, I am ready and willing to serve my country as long as I have health and strength, even on that station, which will be an important and serious one. Had I been in the Mediterranean now, I could have rendered good service. I should have had considerable influence with the Turks, as having before led them to victory, and they have not forgotten me."

The remainder of the year and the first weeks of the next passed without Napier receiving any further communication from the Admiralty, though, as time went on, it became more and more certain that war with Russia could not be avoided. To the old sailor, who was aware that every day's delay would, in the event of his being selected for the command, materially increase the difficulty of getting the fleet ready for sea before the breaking of the ice in the Baltic set the Russian ships at liberty, the suspense was almost unendurable.

"The month previous to his taking command of the Baltic Fleet," writes his daughter, Mrs. Jodrell, in the memoirs which we have already had occasion to cite, "he had been staying with me at the Rectory.* He was all anxiety. Seeing that war was inevitable, he felt pretty sure that the command would be given to him, and, in consequence, was too unsettled to remain long with me. The weather was very severe, and we had a deep fall of snow. In spite of this, he determined on going to London, though no carriage-way was open except on the high roads, where the steam-ploughs had been at work, and that was within two miles of our house. He started walking, with a lad to carry his carpet-bag, keeping under the lee of the hedges till he gained the high road, where he had ordered a fly to await him and take him to Lowestoft. On reaching the station, he found the line was partially blocked, and only a special train with the railway inspectors about to start; they politely offered him a seat. On reaching Norwich, the delay was so great, he crossed to the Lynn line, and reached London after a long and tedious journey, having, however, escaped a serious accident which happened on the Cambridge line, which he had, in his impatience, quitted. When once his mind was set on anything, nothing could deter him."

From London he wrote to Mrs. Jodrell :—

"February 5th, 1854.

"My dearest Fanny,

"I know no more than I did officially, but I am told by the different Lords of the Admiralty, and, indeed, by everybody, that I

* Gisleham Rectory, Suffolk.

am to command the Baltic Fleet; but the Government are not taking any vigorous measures to man that fleet, and it will be quite impossible to get it ready for action by the time the Baltic is open. I have only seen Lord Aberdeen once, and Lord Clarendon and Sidney Herbert, and I have given them my opinion of the way they ought to man the fleet; but they appear to be quite insensible to our danger, and are too parsimonious to offer a bounty, and very few efficient men are entered. The Lords of the Admiralty think with me, but they appear to have no influence with the Government. The Russian Ambassador is gone, but still war does not follow, and, as all the Cabinet have declared against the Emperor, if they are serious, we hardly can go on; but still we are wrong to have an unmanned fleet to contend against a well-manned and well-trained one, which the Russian is.

"It is impossible to decide about your coming to town till something decided is known, of which I will make you acquainted as soon as I can.

"With best regards to Jodrell and kisses to the pets,

Believe me, my dearest Fanny,

"Your affectionate father,

"CHARLES NAPIER."

And a few days later he wrote again :—

"February 9th, 1854.

"MY DEAREST FANNY,

"Nothing is yet decided that I know. I believe there are all sorts of intrigues at work—how it will end I know not. If I go, I cannot tell you anything till I know the movements of the fleet; but, as they cannot leave the country before the middle of March at the soonest, I shall have time to arrange where we are to meet.

"I have been kept in great suspense since I saw you, not so much on my own account, as on account of the short time there is to organize the fleet, for which the Government will have to answer.

"God bless you all!

"Your affectionate father,

"CHARLES NAPIER."

On the same day on which this letter was written, Sir James Graham wrote to Queen Victoria :—

"Admiralty, February 9, 1854.

"Sir James Graham with humble duty begs to lay before your Majesty certain important considerations discussed at the Cabinet yesterday with respect to the selection of a Commander-in-Chief for the fleet about to be assembled for service in the Baltic.

"The number of ships to be employed, and the probable co-operation of a French squadron, renders the appointment of an admiral or of a vice-admiral indispensably necessary.

"Of admirals there are but two whom Sir James Graham could recom-

mend as eligible for this important command. These two are Lord Dundonald and Sir William Parker.

"Lord Dundonald* is seventy-nine years of age, and, though his energies and faculties are unbroken, and with his accustomed courage he volunteers for the service, yet, on the whole, there is reason to apprehend that he might deeply commit the force under his command in some desperate enterprise, where the chances of success would not counteract the risk of failure and of the fatal consequences that might ensue. Age has not abated the adventurous spirit of this gallant officer, which no authority could restrain; and, being uncontrollable, it might lead to most unfortunate results. The Cabinet, on the most careful review of the entire question, decided that the appointment of Lord Dundonald was not expedient.

"Sir William Parker's health is failing. He has served in every climate and quarter of the globe; he desires rest and well deserves it.

"Of vice-admirals also there are but two whose fitness for the command has come under discussion. These are Sir George Seymour and Sir Charles Napier.

"Sir George Seymour is absent in North America . . . and Sir James Graham could not advise that the command of the North Sea Fleet should be kept open to await his return. On the contrary, not a day should now be lost for completing the equipment and arrangement of a squadron for the Baltic, and the first step is the nomination of a Commander-in-Chief.

"The choice would seem to fall on Sir Charles Napier, and though this appointment may be open to some objections, it is strongly recommended by many considerations.

"Sir Charles Napier is an excellent seaman, and combines boldness with discretion. He has served in large squadrons, and he has commanded them. As a second, he may not have been submissive, as a chief, he has been successful in command. This appointment will give confidence to both officers and men, and his name is not unknown both to enemies and allies. If he has the faults of his family, he is not without their virtues. Courage, genius, love of country, are not wanting, and the weighty responsibility of a high command, without depressing him, would give steadiness to his demeanour.

"He behaved ill to Lord John Russell, and to Sir Francis Baring, and on shore he has given just cause of complaint. But at sea and in command he is a different person, and Lord John Russell, in the Cabinet yesterday, regardless of all former displeasure, pronounced an opinion favourable to the appointment. Lord Aberdeen also, together with the entire Cabinet, came to the same conclusion; and Sir James Graham, on their behalf and in concurrence with his own opinion, ventures to ask the permission of your Majesty to appoint Sir Charles Napier to this important naval command."

* This was the celebrated Lord Cochrane, under whom Napier had served on the coast of North America forty years before. He is said to have stipulated on this occasion that he should be allowed to destroy Cronstadt by a chemical process which he had invented.

The Queen approved, but, for some reason, his selection was not immediately communicated to Napier, who, on the following day, wrote to Sir James Graham :—

" 18, Albemarle Street,
" February 10th, 1854.

" My dear Sir James,

" After what you wrote me and said to me, you cannot be surprised that I should be most anxious to know the decision of the Cabinet.

" If I am to command the fleet, I have many things to attend to. I have my own private affairs and two houses on my hands to get rid of, which requires some little time.

" The fleet is ordered to collect and to be manned, and a junior admiral is appointed. I believe I am popular with the sailors and have influence over them, and many would come forward if they knew I was to command them.

" I believe I would be accepted by the country, and I have the strongest letters from members of the present Cabinet, as well as from members of former Cabinets under whom I have served, and you have expressed on many occasions your opinion of my professional conduct, as has every Admiralty I have served under.

" The time to organize the fleet is short ; we have a powerful enemy to meet, and may have to fight a great battle in a few weeks at sea, or even have to search them in their own ports.

" The Commander-in-Chief ought to be acquainted with the tools he has to work with ; he ought to visit all the ships and excite them to the greatest exertion ; he ought to be collecting information as to the state of the enemy from Masters of Dépôts who have navigated the Baltic, and he ought to be in constant communication with you to make known the wants of the ships, and he has his officers to select—all this and much more I should have explained to you had I had an opportunity. I made three attempts to see you in vain, and I own I was humiliated at being refused. I do most earnestly beg you will as soon as possible inform me of the decision of the Cabinet and relieve me from the painful suspense I have been in for several weeks.

" I remain, my dear Sir James,
" Yours very truly,
" Chas. Napier."

To this letter he received the following reply :—

" Admiralty, February 10, 1854.

" My dear Sir Charles,

" The appointment to the command of the North Sea Fleet is a very serious affair, and cannot be decided in a hurry. While the question is pending, there is no use in discussing it with you, and that is the reason why I have avoided a personal interview, not intending to mark any want of respect, but desirous to prevent any needless disappointment.

"War is not declared; no fleet is as yet assembled, and no final arrangements are at present concluded. In these circumstances, it is not in my power to make any communication to you at this moment.

"I am,

"Yours sincerely,

"J. G. GRAHAM."

This letter appears to have led Napier to believe that there was an obstacle to his appointment in some quarters, for on February 12 we find him writing to the First Lord:—

"I plainly perceive by your letter that, however high an opinion you may have of me, and which I know you have expressed to Lord Clarendon, Lord Palmerston, and others, the *Taboo* is still on me in some quarters.

"However, if I am not to go to the Baltic, I have no doubt someone will be selected who will serve the country as faithfully as I have done."

After waiting a few days longer, without receiving any further communication from the First Lord, Napier went to Merchistoun, but a week later returned to London, and writes to his daughter:

"February 23 (? 22), 1854.

"MY DEAREST FANNY,

"I am still in the dark, but I am asked to dine with Lord Clarendon to-day. Perhaps I may hear something, and will not fail to let you know. I hear Lord John [Russell] is not the hitch; therefore, I don't know where it is. Admiral Sir W. Parker goes to Plymouth.

"I agree with you that they will not appoint me unless it is war.* I have been to Merchistoun for a week.

"God bless you!

"Your affectionate father,

"CHAS. NAPIER."

And on the following day he writes:—

"February 23rd, 1854.

". . . I was last night at Lord Clarendon's. Every person congratulated me on the command; I replied I knew nothing about it and referred them to Lord Clarendon. He said: 'You will know to-morrow night.' He, as well as the others, are angry at my telling them that they are manning the Navy badly, and that they ought to give a bounty, and asked if I had spoken to Graham. I told them he would not see me, and that he could not be surprised at my anxiety, as the whole brunt would fall

* In a letter to her father, Mrs. Jodrell had expressed the opinion that the Government still hoped for peace, and that, in that case, were he appointed they would be placed in a dilemma.

on me, if I went. They are perfectly ignorant, and Graham will not listen to the Board. I told Lord Clarendon, if the fleet were not properly manned, no man of character would take the command. He said I was always finding fault. I replied my finding fault was the cause of us having so far a Navy, and, if they would give me a ten-pound note in one hand and grog in the other, I would man the fleet for them. Under these circumstances, I should not be at all surprised if I were not appointed. . . . I am in great suspense. Lord John [Russell] told Parker that he was not the cause of my non-appointment. He goes to Plymouth —he was not offered the command, and he says he is not fit for it."

In the course of the day Napier was sent for by Graham, and informed that the Cabinet had selected him for the command of the Baltic Fleet, though this fleet had to be formed as well as manned. Of the leading ships that were to compose it some were at Lisbon, while others had to be got together from various ports. This would naturally involve considerable delay, at a time, too, when every day was precious; but the most important question was how the fleet, when it had been assembled, was to be manned. Notwithstanding the repeated remonstrances of Napier and other distinguished officers, nothing whatever had been done towards training men or even obtaining men to train. The public voice having pronounced very decidedly against the old system of impressment, Sir James Graham had some time before passed a Bill through Parliament, which empowered the Sovereign, in the event of war, to issue a proclamation offering an ample bounty to all seamen who volunteered promptly when called upon—a step which, had it been acted upon, would, in all probability, have supplied men almost as fast as ships could have been brought forward to be manned. In his interview with the First Lord, Napier, therefore, urged the necessity of issuing this proclamation forthwith, as the only way to obtain men expeditiously. He further pointed out that a considerable number of excellent seamen were to be found on board the numerous yachts belonging to private gentlemen, and that, if the Queen would consent to transfer the men from her own yacht to the flagship, these gentlemen would undoubtedly follow her example and lay up their yachts. By adopting these measures a good class of seamen would be at once obtained; whereas, if they were not, the fleet must of necessity be badly manned, as without any offer of bounty, inexperienced men could alone be obtained.

To his intense chagrin, the Admiral's suggestions met with a decided refusal from Sir James Graham, who, in a letter of the 24th, informed him that he looked upon them in the light of "signs of distress," which he considered impolitic and unnecessary, and which he could not sanction.

"It could scarcely have been a 'sign of distress,'" observes Earp, in his "Baltic Campaign of 1854," "to adopt the best means of manning the fleet promptly and efficiently, seeing that it was immediately and imperatively required. The real reason for the refusal lay deeper. In the passage of the Bounty Bill through Parliament, it had been so framed that the men already on board the fleet could also have claimed the offered bounty, which would then have amounted to half a million of money. For this half a million Government would have to apply to the House, in the face of the fact that, in 1847, Sir Charles Napier, when in Parliament, anticipated the difficulty which would arise, and which now had arisen, and endeavoured, but in vain, to amend the want of foresight in Sir James Graham's Bill. The First Lord's position was a delicate one; but still it is to be regretted that the efficiency of the fleet should have been sacrificed to half a million.

"This refusal to give bounty to seamen, of whom there was a considerable number waiting in expectation of its being offered, was the more singular, as the Government was more lavish of bounty to militiamen, and still more so to the utterly useless Foreign Legion—a body of men who have reflected far more discredit on themselves than credit on our arms. To our seamen no bounty was offered. Any one who presented himself had to be accepted. No provision was made to clothe them in the manner which an Arctic climate required, and such as could afford it had afterwards to clothe themselves or go without. Yet England prides herself on being a naval nation!"

Accompanying this refusal to adopt the suggestions of the Admiral as to manning the fleet was an intimation from the First Lord that, in the conversation which he had had with him on the subject, a "painful impression" had been left on his mind, and that, "if dissatisfied with the preparations which had been made and were in progress, and, if he had not entire confidence in the strength of the combined forces of France and England, he had better say so at once, and decline to accept a command which, in his opinion, would not redound to his honour or to the safety of his country."

It would certainly have been well for Napier had he availed himself of this opportunity of declining what was to prove one of the most difficult and thankless tasks ever undertaken by a

naval officer. But he would appear to have considered it a point of honour not to refuse any service with which his Queen and country wished to entrust him, and accordingly replied as follows :—

" 18, Albemarle Street,
" February 24, 1854.

" My dear Sir James,—I thought it my duty to point out to you what I thought the best way of manning the fleet, to ensure a great, glorious and speedy victory over the Russians.

" I never made difficulties when service was required, and, after a life spent in honour, I am not going to make them now.

" I should consider myself a coward, and unworthy of holding Her Majesty's commission, were I to decline any service, be it ever so desperate.

" Lord Nelson never declined service; no more shall I—particularly after the confidence you placed in me—but, with means at my disposal, will do all I can for the honour and glory of my Queen and country, which shall not be tarnished in my hands. And I certainly have no apprehension of failing either in goodwill or hearty concurrence with the Board of Admiralty.—I am, my dear Sir James, yours very faithfully,

" Charles Napier."

To which letter the First Lord at once rejoined :—

" House of Commons,
" February 24, 1854.

" My dear Sir Charles,

" I do not anticipate that I shall ask you to undertake any 'desperate' service. When I offered you the command, I felt certain that the Honour of the Country and of the Flag might be safely confided to you. Your apparent distrust of the means which I could place at your disposal was the sole cause of some uneasiness on my part. Your note of this evening has dissipated all doubt and apprehension. I shall be most happy to see you at the Admiralty to-morrow at eleven o'clock, when we will discuss the arrangements which it will be necessary to make.

" I am, my dear Sir Charles,
" Yours very faithfully,
" J. G. Graham."

On the morrow Napier duly kept this appointment, and had a " long and satisfactory conversation " with the First Lord, after which he wrote to his daughter :—

" February 23rd, 1854.

" My dearest Fanny,

" I yesterday was nearly pitching the whole concern to the Devil. I urged Sir James Graham to give a bounty, which he refused,

and then wrote me an improper letter. My first impulse was to throw the thing up, but, on reflection, I wrote him a sharp letter which ended the affair, and things are going on. They tell, in the House, the vilest lies about seamen entering; they are trash, and no man ever had such an arduous undertaking to perform as I will have. But, had I given up, the whole country would have been against me, as they believe the fleet is magnificently manned, and I will venture to say I would take them all with the squadron I had in 1846. But I shall say no more, and write you more fully when I know what I am to do and what time I will have to do it. . . . Keep all to yourself and write to me daily.

"God bless you all!

"Your affectionate father,

"CHAS. NAPIER.

"I have just had a long and satisfactory conversation with Graham."

On the same day Napier received the official notification of his appointment to the command of the Baltic Fleet, with orders that, when the first division should be ready for sea, he was to proceed to Wingo Sound on the coast of Sweden, and there await the arrival of the remaining ships.

CHAPTER XXI

THE REFORM CLUB DINNER—DEPARTURE OF THE BALTIC FLEET

ON receiving his appointment Napier hoisted his flag on board the *Fishguard*, at Woolwich, but shortly afterwards transferred it to the *Princess Royal* at Spithead, which ship he found, from some accident, ashore on the Middle Bank. Commodore (afterwards Sir Michael) Seymour was appointed Captain of the Fleet; while Captain George Gordon was nominated by Napier to the command of the *Duke of Wellington*, she being destined for the flagship on her arrival from Plymouth. This vessel, which was a familiar object to visitors to Portsmouth Harbour until quite recent years, was a gigantic three-decker of 131 guns. Besides being a beautiful sailer, she could steam with ease at eight knots, and was considered to represent the last word in naval architecture.

Great exertions were made by the Admiralty to get the fleet ready for sea, since, from the intelligence which they received as to the probability of the early breaking up of the ice within the Baltic, fears were entertained that a Russian squadron might take advantage of this to slip out and inflict damage upon our coasts. They soon discovered, however, the evil of having neglected Napier's repeated warnings with regard to manning the fleet, which, had they been accepted, would long before have been completed, and the crews in a state of tolerable discipline.

"Now that the last moment had arrived," writes Earp, "it soon became evident that to man a fleet without offering bounty was no easy matter. Good seamen, many of whom were known to be waiting for bounty—especially in the North of England—according to the custom of former wars, would not come forward. The men who had entered at the Tower were so inferior, that Admiral Berkeley, who had charge of manning the squadron, deemed it expedient to request of the First Lord of the Admiralty

that two other lords might be sent to examine them. This was done, but with instructions to the examiners 'not to be too particular.' The consequence was that men of all descriptions were entered, 'even to butchers' boys, navvies, cabmen, etc.,' 'not men of the standard of the Guards,' as Admiral Berkeley afterwards stated in the House of Commons. Fortunately, there were some old seamen available, who had been employed as riggers in the Dockyard, as well as some coastguardsmen; but many of these were too old for such an arduous expedition, while some had never been to sea before. Still, all were an improvement on the mass casually picked up. The officers were, for the most part, inexperienced in the movements of a fleet, whilst of mates and midshipmen, one could scarcely be found on a watch. Of such material was the Baltic Fleet composed."

The public, ignorant of these matters, and always inclined to repose the most absolute confidence in that arm of defence on which the nation depended for its security—though too often without inquiry as to its real efficiency, upon which that security depended—were delighted at the appointment of such a favourite of Fortune as Napier to the command, and public enthusiasm indulged in the most extravagant expectations as to what the squadron under his leadership would shortly accomplish.* The

* This enthusiasm found expression in various poetical broadsheets, such as "Bold Napier," "Hurrah for England and Charley Napier!" and "Give it to him, Charley!" of the last of which, sung to the air of "Royal Charlie," we append the first two and last two stanzas :—

"Arouse, you British sons, arouse,
And all who stand to freedom's cause,
While I sing of the impending wars,
And England's bluff old Charley.
I'll tell how British seamen brave,
Of Russian foes will clear the wave,
Old England's credit for to save,
Led on by gallant Charley.

"Our gallant tars led by Napier,
May bid defiance to the bear,
While hearty shouts will rend the air
With 'Mind and give it him, Charley.'

"Our jolly tars will have to tell
How they the Russian bears did quell,
And each honest heart with pride will swell,
For our jackets blue and Charley.
For they will never leave a blot or stain,
While our British flag flies at the main,
But their foes they'll thrash again and again,
While led on by gallant Charley.

utter insufficiency of his badly-manned and worse-disciplined squadron, as compared with the Russian fleet and fortresses—some of the latter far superior in strength to Sebastopol—was not taken into account. Nor was it taken into account that the fleet, though it contained some of the finest ships afloat, was to leave England totally unprovided with gunboats and smaller vessels of light draught, absolutely indispensable for the success of any enterprise amid the creeks and shallows of the Baltic, where the very size of our great line-of-battle ships rendered them of little use, owing to the great draught of water which they required. "The British fleet was a British fleet, and, as its commander had formerly beaten all opponents, he could do so again."*

The public was not to blame. Then, as sixty years later in regard to our military resources, it was the dupe of dishonest politicians, whose interest it was to conceal the fatal effects of the cheeseparing economy for which they had sought to gain credit in time of peace. Moreover, the voices of Napier's admiring friends in high places were raised to predict splendid triumphs for him, and the sailing of the fleet was preceded by ceremonials calculated to bring ridicule upon the expedition if it failed to achieve some startling success. On March 7, he was entertained by them to a sumptuous banquet at the Reform Club, to which over 150 persons sat down, as many as the room could conveniently hold. Lord Palmerston was in the chair, and Sir James Graham was also present, and a good deal of exuberant nonsense was talked. "Lord Palmerston," writes Justin

"England and France they will pull down
The Eagle and Imperial crown,
And his bear-like growls we soon will drown,
With 'Let us give it to him, Charley.'
For while England and France go hand in hand,
They conquer must by sea or land,
For no Russian foe can e'er withstand
So brave a man as Charley.

"Despotic Nick, you've been too fast,
To get Turkey within your grasp.
But a tartar you have caught at last,
In the shape of our tars and Charley.
Then here is success with three times three
To all true hearts by land or sea,
And this the watchword it shall be,
'Mind and give it to him, Charley.'"

* Sir Charles Napier's "Campaign in the Baltic."

McCarthy, "carried away by his natural *bonhomie* and high animal spirits, showered the most extravagant praise upon the gallant Admiral, intermixed with jokes which set the company laughing consumedly, but which read by the outer public next day seemed an unbecoming prelude to an expedition that was to be part of a great war and of terrible national sacrifice."* The historian adds that Napier "quite forgot, in his rough self-confidence, the difference between boasting when one is taking off one's armour and boasting when one is only putting it on;" while Delane's nephew and biographer, Mr. A. I. Dasent, declares that "he (Napier) made a bombastic speech to the effect that within a month he would be either in Cronstadt or in hell."† Well, here is Napier's speech—presumably a verbatim report—as given in the *Times* of the following day, from which the reader will be able to judge for himself the accuracy of these two writers' statements :—

"My Lord and Gentlemen,—I can scarcely find words to express to you my gratitude for the very handsome manner in which you have received my health. I am rather singularly situated at this moment, for I have on my left a noble lord [Palmerston] who was one of the Lords of the Admiralty when I began my career in the Navy, and on my right I have my right hon. friend who is now the First Lord of the Admiralty. The noble lord has entertained the company by some allusions to my agricultural pursuits, and has given me credit for having devised some plans for improving the agriculture of this country. He has, however, omitted one plan that I recommended to him as a means of getting young lambs early. (Great laughter.) I will not repeat it here, but I shall be extremely happy to explain it to any gentleman who will apply to me on the subject. (Laughter.) The noble lord has also followed me to Portugal, and where he has found all his amusing stories is quite astonishing to me. (A laugh.) On one point I must correct him, because he has given me credit which belongs to others. He stated that I was the first who boarded the Portuguese line-of-battle ship. My gallant captain, Captain Wilkinson, now no more, and my son, who was lost in the *Avenger*, were, however, the first who boarded that vessel. The noble lord has alluded to my campaigns in the north of Portugal. There, fortunately, as well as in Syria, I was successful, and I hope to be so in the expedition upon which we are now about to embark. I cannot say we are at war, because we are still at peace—(great laughter)—but I suppose we are very nearly at war, and probably when I get into the Baltic I'll have an opportunity of declaring war. (Loud cheers, laughter, and a cry of

* "History of Our Own Times."

† "John Thadeus Delane, Editor of the *Times*: His Life and Correspondence."

'Bravo, Charley!') Certainly, if I have that opportunity, I hope it will end in a prosperous war, for I may safely say this country never sent out such a splendid fleet as will sail for the Baltic in a very few days. I think my right hon. friend (Sir James Graham) and his coadjutors at the Admiralty deserve the greatest credit for having fitted out such a fleet in such a manner after so long a peace. (Cheers.) My hon. friend, the Surveyor of the Navy, has corrected the faults and errors that had been committed for a great number of years; and I don't think we could now point out a single fault in the construction of our ships. We have now enormous line-of-battle ships that, with the screw, will face wind, tide, and every element. I do not mean to say that our fleet is yet in order, but I believe, considering the officers that have been appointed to it, that it very soon will be. With the force, then, that we have, although it is not equal to the Russian force, I believe that by the assistance of the screw we shall be able to attack a very superior force, and I have not the slightest doubt when we do that, that every sailor and every officer in our fleet will remember the words of Lord Nelson, that 'England expects every man to do his duty.' (Loud cheers.)"

But, if Napier prudently refrained from the "boasting" and "bombast" attributed to him, Lord Palmerston and Sir James Graham made ample amends in this respect, and this unlucky Reform Club dinner served to excite expectations amongst the public which, even had the Commander-in-Chief of the Baltic Fleet possessed the genius of a Nelson, combined with the dash and resource of a Cochrane, he could never have justified.

On Wednesday, the 8th, Napier received directions to order Her Majesty's ships at Spithead to hold themselves in readiness to sail at the shortest notice for Wingo Sound, where he was to await further instructions, and the following morning, as he was attending the Queen's levée, the following note from the Secretary to the Admiralty was handed to him :—

"Admiralty,
"9th March, 1854.

"SIR,

"I am commanded by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to signify their directions to you to proceed to sea with the ships that you command on Saturday next at 12 o'clock noon.

"Yours, etc.,
"R. OSBORNE."

Later the same day, he received a letter from Sir James Graham :—

"You will have received your orders before this letter reaches you. By waiting until Saturday at noon you will avoid sailing on Friday; more perfect arrangements will be made. Your interpreters will join you in the course of the day, and Her Majesty will see you sail.

"Some further instructions will be sent you to-morrow, and on Sunday I have no doubt you will find the *Hecla* in the Downs, with the masters and pilots on board.

"I shall hope to have the pleasure of seeing you on Saturday morning. I shall go to Portsmouth to-morrow night."

That evening Napier went to Merchistoun to take leave of his family, and the following day, accompanied by his daughter, Mrs. Jodrell, proceeded to Portsmouth, where he received the following despatch from the Admiralty :—

"Admiralty.

"*By the Lords Commissioners.*

"With reference to our orders of the 8th inst., directing you to proceed with the ships under your orders to Wingo Sound, and to wait there for further instructions, we transmit herewith to you a copy of a letter from the Earl of Clarendon, Her Majesty's principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, signifying the Queen's commands as to the line of conduct to be followed by you in the present state of the relations between this country and Russia, and we hereby require and direct you to conform yourself in all respects to the instructions contained in the said letter, taking care to so dispose the fleet under your orders as to preclude the possibility of any Russian ships of war passing out of the Baltic into the North Sea.

"Given under our hands,

"10th March, 1854,

"J. G. GRAHAM.
"HYDE-PARKER.

"To Sir Charles Napier.

"By command of their lordships."

Lord Clarendon's letter, of which a copy was enclosed, was as follows :—

"Foreign Office,

"9th March, 1854.

"*To the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.*

"MY LORDS,

"The accounts which have been received in this country represent the ports of the Baltic to be in a great measure free from ice, and I have therefore to signify to your lordships the Queen's commands that Her Majesty's fleet, under the orders of Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Napier,

should proceed forthwith and take up a position near the entrance into that sea, from which it may be able to give effect without loss of time to such further orders as Her Majesty may direct to be conveyed to it.

"Your lordships are aware that Her Majesty's Government have addressed a summons to that of Russia, and that upon the answer which may be returned to that summons the question of peace or war between England and Russia now depends. That answer will not in all probability be received by Her Majesty's Government until the expiration of a fortnight from this time; but, judging from the tenor of a manifesto published by the Emperor of Russia on the 9th of last month, there is unfortunately no reason to suppose that the answer will be otherwise than unfavourable to the maintenance of peace. Nevertheless, until the decision of the Emperor of Russia is made known, Her Majesty's fleet will not be authorized to assume an attitude of positive hostility to Russia, or to seek occasions for conflict with the fleets of Russia in her own ports. But short of this and in the present state of the relations between the two countries, it will be the duty of Her Majesty's fleet to take care that no Russian ship of war passes out of the Baltic into the North Sea, where its presence, in the event of war, might be attended with serious inconvenience to the commerce of the country. I need not dwell on the disappointment which would be felt if, by any overstrained forbearance on our part, any portion of the Russian Fleet should be allowed to place itself in a position to inflict injury on British interests on sea or land.

"Your lordships will therefore enjoin Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Napier so to dispose the fleet under his orders as to preclude the possibility of any ships of war passing out of the Baltic into the North Sea. If any Russian ships should attempt to do so before war is declared, Sir Charles Napier will apprize their commanders of his instructions, and, failing to persuade them to abandon their intention, will apply force to compel them to do so.

"If any such ships should seek shelter in a neutral port, Sir Charles Napier will watch them and take such precautions as under these circumstances he may deem sufficient to effect the object contemplated by his instructions.

"It will be my duty to give your lordships the earliest information as to the result of the communication which has been made to the Russian Government.

"I have, etc.

"(Signed) CLARENDON."

The first division of the Baltic Fleet which was to sail with Napier comprised eight screw line-of-battle ships, four screw frigates and four paddle-steamers. Of these ships, two—the *Duke of Wellington* and the *Royal George*—were three-deckers, while three carried Admirals' flags—Sir Charles Napier's in the

Duke, Admiral Chads's in the *Edinburgh* and Admiral Plumridge's in the *Leopard*. Here is the list:

Screw Line-of-Battle Ships.

	Guns.	Men.	
Duke of Wellington (Flag of Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Napier)	131	1,100	Capt. G. T. Gordon.
Royal George	121	990	Capt. H. J. Codrington.
St. Jean d'Acre	101	900	Capt. Hon. H. Keppel.
Princess Royal	97	850	Capt. Lord C. Paget.
Hogue	60	660	Capt. W. Ramsay.
Ajax	58	630	Capt. Warden.
Blenheim	60	660	Capt. Hon. F. Pelham.
Edinburgh (Flag of Rear-Admiral Chads)	58	630	Capt. R. S. Hewlett.

Screw-Frigates.

Impérieuse	50	530	Capt. R. B. Watson.
Arrogant	47	450	Capt. H. R. Yelverton.
Amphion	34	320	Capt. A. C. Key.
Tribune	30	300	Capt. Hon. S. T. Carnegie.

Paddle-Steamers.

Leopard (Flag of Rear-Admiral Plumridge)	18	280	Capt. G. Giffard.
Dragon	6	200	Capt. J. Wilcox.
Valorous	16	220	Capt. C. H. M. Buckle.*

There was not a single ship in the division dependent upon sail alone for propulsion; while there were twelve, that is to say, all the liners and the four frigates, which, being screws, were equally available as steamers or as sailing vessels, or as both combined. But there was not even one gunboat, a type of vessel of the utmost value in negotiating the shoals and narrows of the Baltic.

The *Neptune*, *Boscawen* and *Prince Regent* remained behind to form the nucleus of the second division which was to assemble

* The *Duke of Wellington*, *Princess Royal*, *Impérieuse* and *Tribune* were the most recent products of the dockyards. The *Royal George* was the oldest ship, having been built at Chatham so far back as 1827. The *Blenheim*, *Hogue*, *Ajax* and *Edinburgh* had been recently employed as blockships. The *Amphion* and *Arrogant* were among the first, if not the first, men-of-war to be fitted with the screw. The *Blenheim*, *Ajax* and *Edinburgh* had all borne the brunt of active service already, the last having been at St. Jean d'Acre, so that Napier took with him to the Baltic at least one strong memento of former triumphs.

as quickly as possible under the flag of Admiral Corry and to follow Napier to the Baltic.

The departure of the fleet next day took place amid scenes of almost delirious enthusiasm. At 10.30 a.m. Napier left the George Hotel, where he was staying, and accompanied by his daughter and other relatives and friends, and followed by wildly cheering crowds, proceeded to the Guildhall, where, after the Mayor, Alderman Styant, had harangued him in a very flattering speech, in which he declared that " his career stamped him as one of the greatest men of his age," the Town Clerk read and presented him with the following address from the Municipality :—

" We, the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the ancient Borough of Portsmouth, having learned that you were about to embark from our port to take command of the powerful fleet destined for the Baltic Sea (to which distinguished position you have been appointed by the favour of our Most Gracious Sovereign), are anxious, ere you leave the British shores for the probable scene of actual warfare with that Power which has been fitly described as the common enemy of Europe, in defence of the just and honourable cause which this nation, in conjunction with its allies, has espoused, to express our earnest hopes that you will be enabled, if the necessity arises, to lead the mighty armament of which you have the command to some great and glorious victory, and thus compel the Autocrat who has so wantonly disturbed the peace of the world to appreciate the courage and resources of England and France united, which he has hitherto dared to set so completely at defiance.

" Great, indeed, is the responsibility which rests on you, and great are the expectations and anxieties with which the British people will be filled whilst you are engaged in the difficult and perhaps perilous duties to which you are called by your Queen and country. In these duties may the God of Battles aid and prosper you, and may the combined forces under your control, fighting in cordial union in a righteous cause, succeed in materially assisting to bring the coming warfare to a speedy and decisive issue.

" You and the equally brave and gallant men who will rally round you will have the earnest aspirations, not only of the inhabitants of this borough, but of the whole people of the United Kingdom. We wish you God-speed, and pray that the war, which has been thus needlessly forced upon Europe, may eventually result in a lasting peace, check the barbarous policy of aggression, and promote the civilization of the world.

" Given under our common seal this eleventh day of March, one thousand and eight hundred and fifty-four.

" G. B. STYANT, Mayor."

To this address the Admiral, whom Mr. A. I. Dasent is pleased to describe as " going forth to meet the enemy in a spirit of such

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the oil painting by E. W. Gill in the National Portrait Gallery.

ADMIRAL SIR CHARLES NAPIER, K.C.B.

To face p. 260.

THE BALTIC FLEET IN A GALE.

[To face p. 251.

See p. 286.]

complacent self-assurance,"* replied in a manly, straightforward and singularly modest speech, in which, while promising his hearers that he and all under his command would do their very utmost to uphold the honour of the British flag, he particularly warned them not to expect *too much*, as they had no common enemy to meet, the fleet was a new one, and the introduction of steam had so completely altered the system of naval warfare, that it was impossible to predict how much or how little might be achieved :—

"MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN,—When I tell you that I have only twenty-four hours to get ready to go afloat, you will not be surprised if I decline to make a long speech ; however, I beg to thank you for this very kind and handsome address. I believe it is not usual when a man goes abroad to have addresses of this kind presented to him ; but all I can say is this—that I will do the best I can to prevent the British flag from being tarnished. I know a good deal is expected from the fleet, but, gentlemen, you must not expect too much. (Cheers.) We are going to meet no common enemy ; we are going to meet an enemy well prepared. I am sure every officer and man in the fleet will do his duty gloriously ; but, at the same time, I warn you again that you must not expect too much. (Cheers.) The fleet is a new one ; the system of warfare is new ; great consideration is required to ascertain how it is best to manage a fleet urged by steam. The system of warfare is entirely different now to what it was formerly ; but we will do our best—(cheers)—and I am sure I shall remember to the last day of my life the kindness of the people of Portsmouth. (Loud cheers.)"

On leaving the Guildhall, the Admiral returned to the "George," while the Mayor and Corporation, in their robes, proceeded to the Victoria Pier, in order to take farewell of him. Napier arrived there soon after eleven o'clock, but so great was the crowd, it was only with difficulty that he succeeded in reaching the pier-head and procuring a boat to put him aboard the *Sprightly* steamer, which took him out to the flagship. He was accompanied by his daughter, Mrs. Jodrell, his stepdaughter, Mrs. Lacy, Sir Baldwin Walker and Admiral Berkeley ; and Mrs. Jodrell was much shocked to find that, owing to the departure of the fleet on such short notice, there had been no time to furnish her father's cabin with more than a table and a chair. As the Admiral boarded the *Duke of Wellington*, he was loudly cheered

* "John Thadeus Delane, Editor of the *Times*: His Life and Correspondence."

by the crew, and the cheers were taken up by the crowd at every point on shore which commanded a view of the embarkation.

Shortly before one o'clock, the Royal yacht *Fairy* was seen to leave Cowes, and, as she neared the fleet, a Royal salute blazed forth from each ship with bewildering effect, the *Duke* setting the example and being followed immediately by the rest, while as soon as the thunder of the guns had died away the bands played the National Anthem, the marines presented arms, and the sailors swarmed into the rigging and burst into resounding cheers.

Arrived at the head of the fleet, the *Fairy* hove-to, and signalled for the Commander-in-Chief, the admirals of division and captains to come on board. Napier, with Commodore Seymour, was foremost in paying his respects to his Sovereign, hailed, as he went and returned, with rapturous cheering by the occupants of a flotilla of passenger steamers which had collected round the Royal yacht—crazy old tubs, which rolled about as though drunk with the enthusiasm of their living freights. The other admirals and captains followed, and when all had returned to their ships, Napier gave the general signal to the fleet to get under weigh with sails. The Admiral's relatives and friends now took leave of him and returned to the *Sprightly*, and about three o'clock the flagship left her anchorage.

"The spectacle presented by this division of the Baltic Fleet as it quitted Spithead," writes the correspondent of the *Times*, "was one which will not readily be forgotten by those who witnessed it. The *Fairy*, having accompanied the first division of the fleet for several miles, was stopped, and the Queen, with a regular flotilla of boats and steamers around her yacht, saw ship after ship pass under easy sail to fight the battles of the country. Each crew mounted once more into the rigging to give her a round of parting hurrahs, and topgallant sails were lowered —the mark of respect which the Navy itself receives from the mercantile marine. When the *Duke of Wellington* approached the Royal yacht, the rest of the fleet were already dim and faint in the distance. Though under no press of canvas, the brisk west wind had carried them well out to sea, the *Royal George* fitting closely in the receding line, with her huge hull and spreading sails. The crew of the flagship had now, in their turn, to give their farewell cheers. They sprang up the rigging with astonishing rapidity, not stopping according to custom at the cross-trees, but mounting upwards until they had reached the very summit, for the possession of which they struggled. One daring fellow coolly seated himself upon the truck of the main-topmast, where with one hand

he waved his cap in cheering, while he held the other extended, to show that he was unsupported. The hurrahs from the crew of the *Duke of Wellington* at bidding farewell to their Queen and country will long ring in the ears of all who heard them. Her Majesty stood waving her handkerchief towards the mighty ship as she departed, and for a long time after the fleet had gone the Royal yacht remained motionless, as if the illustrious occupants desired to linger over a spectacle calculated to impress so profoundly."*

* A few days later Queen Victoria wrote to the King of the Belgians :

"Osborne, 14th March, 1854.

"My dearest Uncle,—Your kind letter of the 9th arrived here Saturday, just as we returned from a splendid and never-to-be-forgotten sight—the sailing of our noble Fleet for the Baltic ; the Navy and Nation were particularly pleased at *my leading them out*, as they call it, which, in fact, was the case, as in our little *Fairy* we went and lay to, to see them all come out, which (the wind being fair) they did, with sails set, each passing us close by, and giving us three hearty cheers, as I think none but British tars can give. Gloriously they bore along, followed by the prayers and good wishes of us all. You should read the account in yesterday's *Times*. Another sailing squadron goes to-morrow. The captan and admirals all took leave on board, and seemed much impressed by the solemnity of the occasion.

"Ever your truly devoted niece,

"Victoria R."

CHAPTER XXII

WINGO SOUND—PASSAGE OF THE BELT—KIOGE BAY

THE enthusiastic crowds who so loudly acclaimed the Baltic Fleet on its departure from Spithead would have been not a little astonished had they known the actual conditions in which that fleet left our shores. Though few in number, never perhaps had finer ships gone forth to battle; yet never before had a squadron sailed so deplorably manned; indeed, had it not been for the coastguard men, whose conduct and example were beyond all praise, it is difficult to understand how it could have got to sea at all. It was, in fact, the offspring of necessity rather than of preparation, and was short, not only of able seamen, but of almost everything with which a fleet ought to be provided: of clothing, of stores, of shot and shell, of small-arms ammunition and of pilots.*

Before leaving Spithead, Napier had his misgivings that proper pilots had not been provided for the fleet, and made a communication to the Admiralty to this effect. He was assured that he would find all in readiness in the Downs on the 12th; but, in place of this, he found only eight pilots for the sixteen ships composing the squadron.

The eight pilots who were available had made a voyage in the *Hecla* through the Belt and Sound, but knew little of the former, and, in point of fact, were not employed when the squadron afterwards passed the Belt. There were no North Sea pilots whatever.

The same day he received a letter from Sir James Graham :—

* A disgraceful muddle had occurred over the small-arms ammunition. On May 3, 1854 Captain (afterwards Sir Henry) Codrington, who commanded the *Royal George*, wrote from Elgsnabben :

"The very day we left Spithead all the muskets of our party of marines (200 rank and file) were, by order received, exchanged for Minié rifles; but not one Minié cartridge could I get for them, and none have reached me yet, though frequently demanded."—"Letters of Sir Henry Codrington."

"Admiralty, 12th March, 1854.

"My dear Sir Charles,—In the first place, let me congratulate you on the perfect success of your proceedings of yesterday. Never did a fleet sail in more regular order or under higher auspices.

"I send a messenger with these enclosures, which it is desirable that you should see before you reach Wingo Sound. He tells me that, with one or two exceptions named by him to Captain Washington, the Thames and Humber pilots will be of no use to you, but that the masters who have returned in the *Hecla* have acquired by the voyage much valuable information, and that they are quite competent to navigate the fleet through the Great Belt. For the Baltic, pilots must be obtained at Kiel or on the Baltic shore of Sweden. The feeling in Norway is strongly in favour of British interests. *By proper and successful management, you may perhaps contrive to pick up some Norwegian sailors, but they dislike the Swedes and will not pull together in the same ship.* With respect to pilots and enlisting men, you must be cautious, lest ground of offence be given to the Governments of Sweden and Norway, which are afraid of Russia, and seek the shelter of neutrality till you appear in force sufficient to cover them at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland. The Russians are reinforcing Aland by guns and men sent over the ice to Bomarsund. If Sweden could be induced actively to co-operate, there is no difficulty in Aland which might not be overcome. It would be well to open an early communication with Kiel, from whence your supplies will be drawn, and where the best anchorage within the Great Belt will be found. There is a canal, which, for purposes of ready communication with England, should be used by you with vessels of light draught of water. You have none such at present with you. When we know your exact wants, we must endeavour to meet them promptly. It may be possible for you to hire some small vessels of the sort and size required.

"I hope to send three or four sail-of-the-line in the course of the week. *Cressy* and *Euryalus*, I conclude, will accompany you.

"I shall be anxious to hear of your arrival in Wingo Sound. You must keep a good look-out that nothing slips past you in the fogs, which are often prevalent at this season.

"I write, in haste.

"I am, etc.,

"J. R. Graham."

The words we have italicized are surely some of the most extraordinary ever penned by a First Lord of the Admiralty! Never perhaps in our history had a British Admiral been sent forth to war and told to find the sailors to man his fleet—who could have easily been procured—had the gang of muddlers who then controlled our destinies possessed the courage to have recourse to the simple expedient of offering a bounty—amongst foreign nations as he went along—nations, moreover, which, though now professedly neutral, might very easily have become hostile,

should the chances of war have gone against us. Yet this injunction to pick up foreign seamen was afterwards, as we shall see, frequently and most anxiously repeated.

On ascertaining the deficiency of pilots, Napier, on March 13, wrote to the Admiralty, informing them that he had no North Sea pilots at all, and asking whether he was to proceed to sea without them. At the same time, he reminded their lordships that in former wars each ship had always two pilots on board. This provision of North Sea pilots would appear not to have been even thought of at Whitehall, although at this season of the year—close, too, upon the equinox—their total absence constituted a grave danger to the safety of the squadron. The answer he received was that he must go to sea without them, whereupon, with many misgivings, he got under weigh.

The destination of the squadron was, as we have seen, Wingo Sound, on the Baltic coast of Sweden, near Gothenburg, at which anchorage Napier was instructed to await further orders. Other instructions, accompanied by a sealed despatch, directed that, after passing the 55th degree north latitude, the Admiral was to open the despatch and "conform in all respects thereto."

Happily, no accident occurred on the voyage to Wingo Sound, though the weather was foggy, and the ships, in consequence, were much scattered, some of them reaching the anchorage before the flagship. On the 16th, when the fog cleared away, there were only three ships—the *St. Jean d'Acre*, *Edinburgh* and *Hogue*—in company. However, on the 18th, the whole squadron, with the exception of the *Royal George*, which arrived on the following day, was at anchor in the Sound, and Napier wrote to Sir James Graham :—

"*Duke of Wellington*, Wingo Sound, 18 March, 1854.

"My dear Sir James,—We arrived here at one, after a very favourable passage. Several of the ships parted in a thick fog, but we picked them all up here except the *Royal George*, who, I hope, will cast up to-morrow. We have had a good deal of exercise one way and another, and are making progress; and I hope in a short time we shall be fit for battle. With the exception of the *Edinburgh*, *Leopard* and *St. Jean d'Acre*, they are very bad company keepers, and it will require great drilling to keep them together; they have not the least idea of it. There are no pilots for the Belt here, but to-morrow I shall proceed to Copenhagen and see the Minister, and bring up pilots from Elsinore.

"I have picked up two colliers and brought them in here, which will

nearly fill us up. Their going to Elsinore was all wrong. I have a steamer outside looking out for them, and those I do not pick up I shall order to Kiel from Elsinore.

"I have no news except that I believe the Russian advance ships are at Sweaborg. There are none in Revel, but I shall keep the paddle-steamers outside for fear of a surprise. The pilots say this has been a mild winter, but *Miranda*,* I hope, will soon be here with information.

"I shall proceed with the utmost despatch in the execution of my orders, and remain, my dear Sir James, yours very truly,

"CHARLES NAPIER.

"I have opened the orders from the Secretary of State, which shall be punctually attended to, as far as my means will admit. I shall get through the Belt as fast as I can, but you must be aware that, should the Russian ships at Sweaborg get out before I have passed the Belt, if they have a light draught of water, they may get through the Sound, for I must not divide my force."

In a despatch to the Board of Admiralty, dated the same day, Napier states that the squadron had steamed seventy-one hours only, and in a letter to Admiral Berkeley he asks for "lots of blankets, blue clothing and mittens," as the weather was extremely trying for those unaccustomed to the severity of the northern seas, and the men most inadequately protected against the cold.

The sealed orders from the Foreign Office which Napier had just opened were, in effect, the same which Lord Clarendon had desired the Admiralty to convey to him just before he sailed from Spithead, and left ample scope for the exercise of that "discretion" in which he had been accused of being so deficient.

The orders from the Admiralty of March 10 had directed Napier to remain at Wingo Sound until further instructions; but, deeming these to be superseded by the Foreign Office instructions, and recognizing that in the foggy weather which accompanies the breaking up of the ice within the Baltic, nothing would be more easy than for the Sweaborg squadron to make a dash at Copenhagen and convert the wavering neutrality of Denmark into active co-operation with Russia, he decided to pass the Belt and proceed without loss of time to the vicinity of the Danish capital. Before doing so, however, he thought it advisable to visit Copenhagen, in order to gain the most authentic information possible respecting the probable intentions of the Russian squadron at Sweaborg. Accordingly, on the 19th, the day

* The *Miranda* (Captain Lyons) had been despatched to the Baltic some days before the departure of the fleet from Spithead to reconnoitre.

after reaching Wingo Sound, he hoisted his flag on board the *Valorous* steamer, and proceeded to Copenhagen, leaving the squadron in charge of Rear-Admiral Plumridge, who was instructed to exercise the men diligently in target practice, which, from their inexperience, was much needed.

On his arrival at Copenhagen, the Admiral learned that the Russian Government were making every endeavour to effect a junction of a division of the Cronstadt fleet with that at Sweaborg so soon as the state of the ice would permit ; and, as the spring promised to be unusually early, they expected to be successful. In that event, the combined squadrons would experience no difficulty in getting from Sweaborg to Copenhagen, in the absence of the British fleet. It was therefore of paramount importance to anticipate such a movement, and on the following day he wrote to Sir James Graham :—

" I arrived here last night. . . . By all I learn the Russians are fast at Sweaborg, and I hope will remain till we get away to Kiel or the neighbourhood. . . . I leave to-morrow morning, and hope to find the fleet coaled, and, weather permitting, I shall leave Wingo on Wednesday morning.

" I have not been able to get pilots either here or at Elsinore, but I hope they have found some in the neighbourhood of Wingo ; but, if not, I shall place our paddle steamers in the dangerous places and proceed under steam, like a string of wild geese—the smallest vessels first. . . . I hear the Russians are anxious to get a division of their fleet from Cronstadt to reinforce the division at Sweaborg, but I hope to prevent that. I also understand they are sending guns to Aland, but I will see what can be done there. Mr. Buchanan* tells me the Danes are much pleased at our arrival, as it will confirm their neutrality ; but he has no idea they will go a step further. I shall open a communication with Mr. Grey at Stockholm, and I have already done so with Colonel Hodges at Hamburg. I have requested the Minister to hire a steamer, so that he may keep up a constant communication with me as I go through the Belt, and after my arrival at Kiel ; but it is difficult to procure one, and you must not trust to finding them here.

" A number of small steamers are absolutely necessary for despatches, for fire-vessels, and also to protect us from fire-vessels, as, by all I hear, the Russians will be enterprising. Where we are now lying, though in a neutral port, I take it for granted the Russians would not be very particular, and at night they might start a number of fire-vessels amongst the fleet, with a strong wind right in, and make their escape amongst the numerous islands. I have outside of us at present three steamers, but that is not enough—besides, it is too expensive ; it is small vessels

* The British Minister at Copenhagen.

like the Gravesend boats we want. I must be cautious in writing, for I understand all letters are opened in the Prussian post-offices."

On the 21st, Napier returned to Wingo Sound, where he was joined the same day by the *Dauntless*. On the 22nd, he wrote to Sir James Graham that it was his intention to leave the Sound the following morning, pass the Great Belt and anchor in Kioge Bay. And he added:—

"We are getting on fast with our exercises. Admiral Chads [the *Edinburgh*] and *Ajax* are very badly manned; pray reinforce them; the flagships should always be the best-manned."

On the 23rd, soon after 6 a.m., the squadron got under weigh for its new position, where it would be able to command both the Sound and the Belt. It had not been able to procure any pilots at Wingo, nor were those on board competent to take charge of it through the Belt. The passage of this intricate navigation, with line-of-battle ships of great draught, may, therefore, be regarded as a very remarkable achievement, and one reflecting the highest credit on the captains and masters of the several ships, particularly when the inexperience of their men is taken into consideration; and Sir James Graham only did justice to it when he characterized it as "a most successful exploit."*

At 5 p.m. the squadron was off Anhalt, where it was joined by the *Neptune*, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Corry, who had left Spithead on the 18th, and the *Monarch* (Captain John E. Erskine). The *Neptune* was ordered to proceed to Foreness for the night, as it was blowing hard, and there, at 11 p.m., the squadron anchored in a strong gale.

Early on the 24th, the *Leopard* was sent on ahead to place vessels on the various shoals between Foreness and Kallundborg Fiord, a service very judiciously performed by Rear-Admiral Plumridge. The squadron followed shortly afterwards, and at sunset anchored in Kallundborg Fiord; but so badly manned were some of the ships that they could with difficulty furl their sails.

On the following morning, the *Leopard* was again sent forward to place steamers on the Sprogo and Vengeance shoals, and again performed her task in a masterly manner. The squadron

* Graham to Napier, April 10, 1854.

weighed anchor in the teeth of a strong gale, which by 4 p.m. had so much increased, that the Admiral ordered topmasts to be struck. Nevertheless, the ships held on during the night, and at 3 p.m. on the 26th came to an anchor between Nyborg and Sprogo.

In the course of the forenoon the squadron had been joined by the *Miranda*, which had been reconnoitring in the direction of Revel and Port Baltic. Her commander, Captain Lyons, reported that there were no Russian ships of war in either port, both of which he had experienced great difficulty in reaching, having been obliged to force his ship through fifty miles of ice in going, and nearly the same in returning. The service entrusted to him was one from which a less able officer might well have shrunk; yet it had been executed as successfully as though there had not been an ice-floe in the Baltic.

"That Captain Lyons had been able to force his way at all," writes Earp, "was a proof that, with a further break up of the ice, in the time which had elapsed since he quitted Revel, the Russians might, with a fair wind, be able to force their way also; and that there was every reason to believe that they would do so the moment that the ice in the Gulf of Finland became practicable. When Captain Lyons left the Gulf, the ice had not broken up; but the Admiral felt that he would not be through the Belt any too soon to destroy the Russian hope of effecting a junction between their fleets, whatever might be the purpose of such junction.

"That the rapidity of his movements did so deter them is certain. The Russians, believing the British Fleet to be in a high state of efficiency, judged that it might follow in the track of Captain Lyons, and thus meet the Sweaborg division, if it left port. It did not, therefore, venture out, thus rendering any contemplated junction with the Danish fleet out of the question."*

On the 26th, Napier wrote to Sir James Graham, complaining of the inefficiency of some of the ships which had recently joined him:—

"*Neptune*, *Bulldog*, *Monarch* and *Vulture* have joined; the former will do well, but *Monarch* is very bad—hardly fit to go to sea, and certainly not fit to fight. It would be better to give them more time,

* "Sir Charles Napier's Campaign in the Baltic," p. 46.

for in the state they join me they are only a nominal force, and I have the credit of being much stronger than I am: and, if service is to be performed, the force alone will be looked to—not the efficiency."

To these representations the First Lord replied :—

"*I hope to hear that you have been able to enter men in the Baltic.*"* The only immediate hope of reinforcing the fleet with trained sailors from England that he was able to hold out, was the fact that the *Cumberland*, which had been three years in commission, and was now on her way home from the North American Station, would, on her arrival, be despatched to the Baltic, and that probably many of her men would be found qualified for higher ratings, in which case they might be distributed as petty officers amongst the ships in want of them.

On the morning of the 27th, a little after daylight, the squadron, having succeeded in procuring a few pilots, again weighed anchor, first saluting the Danish flag, which salute was duly returned from Nyborg. Shortly after 6 a.m. it passed Sprogo, in the Great Belt, and about four in the afternoon Napier, who had pushed on ahead in a steamer, arrived at Kiel, the rest of the fleet, which had been left in charge of Rear-Admiral Corry, anchoring in the outer roads about 9 p.m.

Thus, within sixteen days only after leaving England, Napier, notwithstanding the absence of pilots, and frequently adverse weather conditions, had successfully conducted the Baltic Fleet through a most intricate and dangerous navigation, without accident of any kind, beyond the temporary disablement of one of the engines of the *Dauntless*.

From Kiel the Admiral wrote to Mrs. Jodrell :—

"Kiel, March 27, 1854.

"My dearest Fanny,—My things are in the fleet, but I have not been able to get them on board, but I hope to do so to-morrow.

"We have got through the bad part of the Belt, and I am now at anchor at Kiel. I left the fleet this morning, and I came up by steamer to make some arrangements about coals, water, etc., and in a few days I shall go to Kioge Bay, a little distance from Copenhagen. I had a steamer up at Revel the other day; she was bored through ice for about fifty miles. The Russians are still frozen up at Sweaborg.

* The italics are our own.

"I have had a good deal of work, up at six o'clock every morning, but I am very well. This is a splendid ship, and we are getting on with our exercises very well, and I hope to be fit for action before we are wanted. I have eleven sail of the line, and I hope in a few days to have four more.

"I wrote to your mother yesterday by a courier passing to Hamburg.

"I am glad you are getting on.

"Believe me, my dearest child,

"Your affectionate father,

"CHAS. NAPIER."

The same day Napier wrote to Admiral Berkeley, upon whom had devolved the charge of manning the squadron, advising him of the bad condition of some of the ships :—

"The *Monarch* is in a most deplorable state; she ought not to have been sent to sea. There is hardly a man in her who knows a rope. You may suppose I am anxious to be reinforced, as, by all I hear, the Russians will be in great force, what with their ships and gunboats. I warn you to beware that, if accidents happen to us from want of men it will be no joke; especially *Ajax* and *Monarch* are badly manned—*Monarch* abominably so. None are fit to go into action as they ought to be. Be sure you send us powder and shot."

Whilst, as regards the fleet, matters were in this state, the public at home, thanks in a great measure to the high-flown descriptions of it with which the Press teemed at the time of its departure from Spithead, appears to have been in expectation that Napier was only awaiting the formal declaration of war to strike some decisive blow. He had, in point of fact, already struck a blow, and a very effective one, for, by the rapidity of his movements, he had completely paralysed those of the Russians, placed his squadron between them and the Danish capital, prevented the smallest chance of any of their cruisers escaping from the Baltic into the North Sea to harry the almost undefended coasts of England, and had the whole of the enemy's forces in front of him, enclosed, as it were, in a net of their own waters, powerless for mischief either against the English coasts or neutral nations. "This fortnight's work alone," observes Earp, "whether nationally or diplomatically considered, was worthy of a campaign."*

But, unfortunately, this kind of silent victory is never properly understood or appreciated by the public, whose in-

* "Sir Charles Napier's Campaign in the Baltic."

ordinate expectations of what the Admiral was shortly to achieve are amusingly ridiculed in a letter which Napier received from Sir Hamilton Seymour, our late Ambassador at St. Petersburg, than whom no one in England was better acquainted with the strength and resources of Russia or the difficulty of attacking her :—

" 5, Belgrave Square, 22nd March, 1854.

" My dear Sir Charles,—If you or any of your captains should fall in with *Anne McAlister*, you will very much oblige me by not pulling her about or taking any liberties with her. I should say nothing about it if *Anne McAlister* were a Scotch lassie, but she is an English vessel, which was obliged to winter at Cronstadt, and which has got on board my pictures and other chattels belonging to me of considerable value. I am doing all I can to make our countrymen more moderate in their expectations, and explain to them that you cannot sail over the ice and take Cronstadt by the wasps'-nest process, and that, even if Cronstadt is taken, the Winter Palace is too large to be packed up for erection in Trafalgar Square.

" Good luck attend you. The closer you clip the wings of the great Bird of Prey of the North, the happier I shall be.

" Very truly yours,

" G. H. Seymour."

On March 29, the squadron, which had been joined by the *Odin* (Captain Scott), again weighed and left the outer roads of Kiel for Kioge Bay. It was shortly afterwards joined by the *Lightning*, surveying vessel (Captain Sullivan) ; but after proceeding some fifteen miles, was obliged to anchor off Langeland, on account of heavy fog.

The fog continuing all next day, the squadron remained at anchor, and the Admiral took the opportunity to write to his daughter :—

" My dearest Fanny,—I have passed all the difficulties of the Great Belt, and am now proceeding to Kioge Bay, in the neighbourhood of Copenhagen, with about twenty-five sail of various sizes and eleven of the line. When the sea opens I shall have thirty in my front, and, unless I am reinforced, I shall have enough to do. The Admiralty are going on with their filling system, not giving bounty, and entering men for a year, and the ships that are here are not fit for action.

" The weather is not very cold, and I have only used my overcoat two or three times, but we may have a great deal of cold yet. We have also fogs, which prevent us from moving. I left Kiel yesterday—only got fifteen miles. I was not able to go on shore, but Colonel Hodges came

on board from Hamburg to see me. We hear that Russia has declared war, but we have not had a line from England by the regular mails, not even in answer to my telegraph. Write to me frequently and direct your letter to Copenhagen.

"I suppose everything is beginning to look beautiful at Merchistoun. . . . Many thanks, my dearest child, for all your good wishes. I have not seen the enemy yet, nor will till the weather gets better.

"I have sent Plumridge up to look at the ice. When the weather moderates I shall follow. I have seen Mr. Lawson; he is in the *Valorous*.

"My love to the children. I shall long to get home again after the turmoil of the command.

"God bless you, my dearest child,

"Your affectionate father,

"CHAS. NAPIER."

On the 31st, the fog having dispersed, the squadron again got under weigh, and at noon on the following day anchored in Kioge Bay. Meanwhile, it had been further reinforced by the arrival of the *Gorgon* (Commander Arthur Cumming), which vessel brought out Mr. G. Biddlecombe, Master of the Fleet; while soon after anchoring the *Conflict* (Captain John Foote) made her appearance.

On the way to Kioge Bay the *Princess Royal* and *Cressy* ran foul of one another, fortunately without any more serious results than the loss of two of the former's boats and the fore-yard and flying jib-boom of the *Cressy*.

Shortly after his arrival in Kioge Bay, Napier received a note from Lord Clarendon, dated March 27, informing him that war had been declared against Russia:—

"MY DEAR NAPIER,—Mr. Ker, attached to the mission at Copenhagen, has some important information to give you, and I therefore send him straight to Kiel, before he goes to his post.

"The message from the Queen was sent to both Houses to-day. So we are at war.

"Yours truly,

"CLARENDON."

Meanwhile, Napier was receiving from the Admiralty all the information they had obtained of the movements and resources of the Russians. On March 18, he was told that it was rumoured that the Russians were fitting their gunboats with disc steam-engines, though the Board did not credit the report; why, was not stated. If such were the case, it was small consolation for

him to know that he had not a single gunboat of his own with which to encounter them. Nor was it much more satisfactory to be informed, on the 27th, that at Cronstadt the Russians had two floating batteries, each armed with four 98-pounders; whilst he had not, then or afterwards, a single mortar in his fleet. He was also told that one of the Russian forts at Cronstadt mounted 128 guns, equally divided into four classes, of 112-pounders, 98-pounders, 74-pounders and 48-pounders.

On March 30, the Admiralty transmitted to Napier the preparations which the Russians were making for his reception, which were, to say the least, disquieting. At Sweaborg, Cronstadt and Revel they were believed to have laid down seventy mines and bombs, for the purpose of destroying his ships. All the forts were supplied with red-hot shot. The Board had also obtained the enemy's plan of meeting the British squadron, which it was apparently assumed would at once proceed to Cronstadt. The Russian vessels were to remain close in harbour, until the British ships had been disabled by the fire of the batteries, when they would issue forth and join their fire to that of the forts. The Sweaborg division was then to be summoned, by telegraph, to the support of the Cronstadt squadron, and the British fleet would be cut off and totally destroyed or captured. The plan was not ill devised, and would without doubt have been attended with more or less success, had Napier been mad enough to attack Cronstadt with the utterly inadequate means at his disposal.

CHAPTER XXIII

KIOGE BAY TO ELGSNABBEN—VISIT TO STOCKHOLM

NAPIER had, as we have seen, shown the most commendable energy in carrying into effect the joint orders he had received from the Foreign Office and the Admiralty, and by his promptitude had completely frustrated any hope which the Russian Government might have entertained of passing cruisers from the Baltic into the North Sea, or of sending their fleet to Copenhagen to intimidate Denmark into joining them. He was therefore profoundly astonished at the receipt of the following curt letter from the Admiralty, demanding an explanation of his having quitted Wingo Sound, instead of remaining there, in accordance with the orders he had received from the Board :—

"Admiralty, 24th March, 1854.

"SIR,—Having laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your letter of the 20th inst., reporting your intention of proceeding with the squadron under your command to Kiel, I am commanded by their lordships to call your attention to their Order, dated the 8th inst., directing you to remain in Wingo Sound until further Orders. As you appear to have left Wingo Sound without assigning your reasons, and to have acted therein without the concurrence of the Board, my Lords conclude that there were sufficient reasons for your having so done.

"I am, etc.,

"R. OSBORNE."

"The Board," observes Earp, "had forgotten that on the 10th of March it had given him an order 'to conform in all respects' to the sealed despatch from the Foreign Office, and that, in that despatch, the Secretary of State had most judiciously commanded him to take up a position which would prevent any egress of Russian ships from the Baltic; neither of which objects could be effected by remaining in Wingo Sound, as will be evident even to an unprofessional reader who will take the trouble to consult a chart of the position. The reprimand,

considering the service rendered, was certainly a strange one, and can only be accounted for by the supposition that they who dictated it could not have read the order from the Secretary of State, nor even their own order commanding the Admiral to act in obedience to the Foreign Office despatch; for even this, from the system in vogue at the Admiralty, is by no means beyond the bounds of probability."*

As may be supposed, the Admiral was justly incensed at receiving such a reprimand at the very outset of the campaign —and that for implicitly obeying orders, and in his reply, dated April 2, referred the Board to their own instructions, as well as to the Foreign Office despatch, which superseded their orders to remain in Wingo Sound. He further pointed out that, had he remained in the Sound until the ice broke up, and then passed the Belt, the Russians might easily have slipped a squadron through the Sound, while his own was engaged in threading the intricate channels of the Belt; and that thus the very disaster which the Government were so anxious to avert might have happened.

To the First Lord he wrote in similar terms :—

"Had I waited until the ice broke up, and the Baltic was free, while I was passing the Belt, the Russians might have passed the Sound, and what would the Government have said to me?—superseded me, to be sure, and served me right."

To Admiral Berkeley he complained more strongly than he could have done officially :—

"You are a queer set of fellows at the Admiralty. You sent me an order from the Secretary of State to place myself at the entrance to the Baltic, to prevent the possibility of a Russian ship getting out of the Baltic, and when I use all my exertions to obey the order, you find fault with me for doing it."

Before, however, Napier's letters reached Whitehall, the Admiralty had discovered the error which they had committed, and, whether from compunction at the injustice they had done him, or from a more perfect appreciation of the masterly movement which had precluded all possibility of the Russians emerging

* "Sir Charles Napier's Campaign in the Baltic."

from their own waters, they began to load him with praises for the very step for which they had previously reprimanded him, and, more particularly, for the able manner in which the manœuvre had been executed.

On April 1, their lordships signified to the Admiral their approval of the new disposition which he had made of his fleet, though they had not the candour to allude to their forgetfulness of their own previous orders, which had occasioned the reprimand of March 24. A second letter, dated the same day, expressed their approbation of the satisfactory manner in which the fleet had passed the Belt. On the 8th, they expressed their entire approval of the Admiral's proceedings, and on the 10th the First Lord added his own individual approval, by expressing his "entire satisfaction" with all that Napier had done, and praising him highly for the very step for which the Board, in their collective capacity, had thought fit to censure him.

"*I am entirely satisfied with your proceedings.* Neither Lord Clarendon nor I anticipated your movements inside the Belt, and believed that you would watch in the Cattegat, the entrance to the Sound and of the Belts, until you received orders to enter the Baltic. You judged, however, wisely, and the time which you have gained has been very precious, and the passage of the Belt in safety has been a most successful exploit.

"You will also have been enabled to exercise your officers and men to great advantage, with the certainty that the enemy is in front of you, blocked up in ice, and that your reinforcements will arrive and that your discipline will improve, before he can move, even if he were so disposed."

And he added :—

"When the state of the ice permits, I conclude that you will establish a close blockade of the Gulf of Finland, dividing the enemy's squadrons at Cronstadt and at Sweaborg, and intercepting the trade of Revel and of Riga. *I rely on your prudence in not knocking your head against stone walls prematurely, or without the certainty of a great success,** or the fair prospect of attaining some most important object worthy of the risk and of the loss, which, when you attack fortresses with ships, are serious and inevitable."

Lord Clarendon also expressed his unqualified approval of Napier's conduct; while Admiral Berkeley assured him that "all his proceedings were highly approved of."

* The italics are our own.

Notwithstanding this reparation for the censure that had been so undeservedly passed upon him, Napier plainly perceived that he was regarded in some quarters with far from friendly feelings, since his private letters to the Board in reference to the inefficiency of the fleet remained for the most part unanswered. On April 8 we find him complaining bitterly to Captain Milne, the Junior Naval Lord, of the discourtesy with which he considered he was being treated :—

"I have at last got a public approval of my conduct, which is preferable to reproof; but I do think the Admiralty ought to express their regret at writing to me as they did. It was most discouraging, when I was doing my best to fulfil their orders. I never get the Board's letters I used to when I was last employed. My private letters are not answered, and I will write no more."

There can be very little doubt that the cause of this was the perhaps inconvenient zeal which the Admiral was manifesting for the efficient manning of his fleet. That his complaints were amply justified was admitted by Sir James Graham, from whom frequent instructions arrived to supply the deficiency of good men by picking up foreign sailors in the Baltic. The anxiety of the First Lord upon this point was almost pathetic.

"Have you been able to pick up any Swedes or Norwegians?" he inquires on April 5. "If you can enter them quietly, and not in too large proportions, they are good sailors and quite trustworthy."

On the 10th, he repeats this inquiry, adding :—

"A certain proportion of them, if they can be induced to enter, would be a valuable addition to your ships' companies."

And on the following day, after suggesting that the place of the men from the *Cumberland*, who were to be distributed as petty officers among such ships as needed them, might be filled by a draft of men from home, he continues :—

"I hope, however, to hear that you have been able to enter them in the Baltic. A proportion of Swedes and Norwegians, or even of Danes, would strengthen you, for they are hardy seamen and brave; and their enmity to Russia is undoubted. The only difficulty will be with their respective Governments; but, if the men enlist freely and come to you

outside the harbours. I cannot see why you should be over nice and refuse to take on board good seamen without much inquiry as to the places from whence they come."

Admiral Berkeley's letters were an even franker acknowledgment of the justice of Napier's complaints.

On March 18th he writes :—

"I hope that the *Caesar* will leave Spithead to join you on the 21st, and that the *James Watt* will leave Devonport on the same errand on the 26th. Then *Prince Regent* and *Majestic ; but men are wanting, and it is impossible to say how long it will be before they are completed.*"*

On March 30 :—

"Notwithstanding the number of landsmen entered, *we are come nearly to a dead stand as to seamen,*† and after the *James Watt* and *Prince Regent* reach you, I do not know when we shall be able to send you a further reinforcement, for want of men. Something must be done, and done speedily, or there will be a breakdown in our present rickety system."

On April 6, he tells the Admiral that, if he [Napier] finds more than 300 able seamen in each of the ships that were being sent to reinforce him, he will be more than agreeably surprised.

And on the 9th :—

"I hope the *St. George* will now follow the *Cumberland, but men—men—men—are wanting.* The Emperor of Russia should burn his fleet or try his strength with you, whilst he musters double your numbers, and *whilst your crews are so miserably raw.*"

He, like the First Lord, caressed the idea that the lack of able British seamen might be, in part at least, supplied by the enlistment of foreigners :—

"Have any of your ships tried for men in a Norwegian port ? *It is said you might have any number of good seamen from that country.*"

"No proofs of the inefficiency of the squadron, as regarded men," observes Earp, "could be more complete than these repeated injunctions to enlist foreign seamen ! To the public,

* The italics are our own.

† The italics are our own.

generally accustomed to regard the British seaman as a model of perfection—which he is, when trained—such injunctions may seem strange; but there they are, forming an incontrovertible proof of the actual condition of the Baltic fleet—a condition of such pressing moment as to render the Admiralty authorities most anxious that it should be rendered more efficient by the *enlistment of foreign seamen!*—Swedes, Norwegians and Danes, or any of them that could be obtained."

Not only did the Baltic fleet contain a large percentage of men who were almost totally ignorant of their duties, but quite a number of the captains were lamentably inefficient.

After the collision between the *Cressy* and the *Princess Royal*, on the way from Kiel to Kioge Bay, Napier writes to Admiral Berkeley :—

"I wonder this was the only accident, for I never in my life saw such ignorance—keeping station either day or night is never thought of."*

And a few days later he writes to Sir James Graham :—

"I am doing all I can to keep the captains up to the mark, but with little success; they neither attend to signals nor guns. It was only the other day I was obliged to make five signals and fire as many guns before I could get one of them to make sail; and though I reprimanded him by letter, and by the Captain of the Fleet in person, the very next day the same thing happened again. The fact is they know nothing about it, and they say so. Perhaps superseding would be too strong a measure, but if I was authorized to make a signal, 'You are of no use to me, and, if you do not show more attention, I will send you home;' and if the thing occurred again, and I could perform my promise and telegraph, 'You are of no use to me; go home'—it would have more effect than all the signals in the world, and strengthen me more than half a dozen ships."†

Here, again, the justice of his complaints was freely admitted by the Admiralty :—

"There is a want of energy among the superior officers that must be noticed. If you have any want of energy to complain of, speak out, and you may rely on my backing you in a way that will make the rest open their eyes."‡

* Letter of April 2.

† Letter of April 9.

‡ Berkeley to Napier, April 6, 1854.

"I hope that you will keep your captains up to the mark; if there be any slackness and you report it, I shall not hesitate to supersede."*

It may be here observed that the shortcomings of the captains appear to have been due to inexperience, and not to any want of willingness. The fact was that very few of them had ever before commanded line-of-battle ships. The fault did not rest with them, but with the Admiralty itself, which had not afforded them the opportunity of acquiring experience in time of peace, from a mistaken economy, which had prevented the formation of experimental squadrons.

That the bad state of the squadron attracted the attention of the neutral Powers and created a most unfavourable impression on them cannot be disputed. "What is the condition of the Russian fleet?" asked Napier of the Danish Minister of Marine, when at Copenhagen. "Their condition is good. They manœuvre well, and *sail in close order*," was the sarcastic reply of the Minister, who had no doubt watched the movements of the British squadron and could not resist the temptation of a hit at its commander.

Prussia was at this time undecided what course to adopt; but no sooner had Napier's squadron, thus inexperienced, and unprovided with a single gunboat or mortar-boat—the only class of vessels which could readily approach the gigantic fortresses of Russia—come to an anchor in Kioge Bay, than the Prussian Government, as though in contempt of what it considered an idle demonstration, placed the port of Memel at the service of the Czar, and thus to a large extent neutralized the effect produced by the presence of the British fleet, which, indeed, confined the Russians to their own ports, but only that their commerce might be carried on through those of Prussia.

This unexpected move on the part of Prussia appears to have greatly disconcerted the British Government, and on April 16 we find Sir James Graham writing to Napier:—

"I hear that attempts have been made in England to get cargoes of coal shipped to Memel, with the intention of transporting them by rail to Cronstadt. If you fall in with any such cargoes, I should advise you to detain them. Coal, if there be reasonable ground to believe that it is destined for the enemy's use for warlike purposes, will be recorded by the Admiralty courts of this country as contraband according to the

* Graham to Napier, April 5, 1854.

laws of nations, as interpreted by Sir William Scott in the last war. 'The reasonable ground of belief' will depend in some measure on the port of delivery, on the character of the parties to whom the cargo is consigned, and on various minute circumstances which cannot be particularized beforehand. But, as in this Memel case, if you have good cause to suspect that the coal is shipped on Russian account, do not hesitate to capture. So also with respect to marine steam-engines and their component parts. You must not allow screw-propellers to reach Russia through Prussian ports."

These were, indeed, singular instructions to a force of the size of Napier's. The Admiral had already been ordered to blockade all the ports of Russia; take care that no vessel from the enemy's fleet, itself more than double the numbers of the British squadron, should be allowed to slip past him into the North Sea, and watch the Aland Islands. And he was now directed to investigate the characters of Prussian consignees, the while his ships were hunting for unpatriotic Newcastle colliers!

"Such a jumble of orders, to means wholly inadequate to execute them," writes Earp, "was, perhaps, never before issued. Even had the Admiral betaken himself to the diversion of collier hunting, the Admiralty Court, amidst the quibbles of the lawyers, could not have condemned one of his prizes. No court could have held that a cargo of coal, consigned by a Newcastle traitor to a characterless Prussian, was on that account lawful prize as contraband of war, whilst no captain, with the fear of the law before his eyes, would have captured a ship under the 'various minute circumstances,' which would have told vastly more against than for him. . . . The commonsense view of the matter is that Prussia, having satisfied herself of the utter inadequacy of our Baltic Fleet as against Russia, had made common cause with the Czar. The British Government could not help it, nor could the Admiral help it. That such was the case was unmistakable, from the advices of the Ministers and Consular Agents. If it had been wished to stop Russian contraband of war from going through the Prussian port of Memel, Memel itself should have been blockaded, after conviction and warning given. Memel was then, and throughout the whole war, notoriously as much a Russian port, both for import and export, as had been Cronstadt itself, before it was blockaded."*

* Just as in the early months of the present war, Rotterdam was as much a German port as was Hamburg in time of peace.

On April 2, Napier had received a letter from Sir James Graham, dated March 30, informing him that France had promised to send a squadron to co-operate with him. The First Lord appears to have anticipated the speedy arrival of the French, and also that Sweden, with her formidable flotilla of gunboats, would eventually join the Allies. But the French fleet did not reach Napier until the second week in June; while of the co-operation of Sweden there was never the least chance.

Whilst Napier lay in Kioge Bay, he did not allow the squadron to remain idle, and it was occupied every day that the weather would permit—for violent gales were of frequent occurrence—in the exercises necessary to make the men proficient both in gunnery and seamanship. Particular attention was devoted to target practice, but, unfortunately, the fleet was prevented from attaining the degree of proficiency in marksmanship which an adequate supply of ammunition would have ensured, for presently the following injunctions arrived from Admiral Berkeley :—

"You must hold hard in the expenditure of shells for practice. Like everything else, the shells are on a peace establishment, and the Ordnance are obliged to fall back on those destined for the *advance* ships to supply your present demands. They are going on leisurely making so many each year to increase their stock, as if the declaration of any war would wait till they were complete. In short, the stock is barely sufficient to meet what may be required in action—without expending any for practice."*

Now that Napier had the whole Russian fleet in front of him, and that he held in his hands the keys of egress to the North Sea, his attention was especially directed to the Aland Islands. Concerning these islands, the British Government had been unable to obtain any reliable information. Sometimes, it was reported that they were to be evacuated; at others, that the garrison of Bomarsund had been raised to 9,000 men, and so forth. Sir James Graham therefore directed the Admiral to make a strong reconnaissance, and to inform the Government of the result.

As the ice was still the obstacle to further progress up the Baltic, Napier despatched Admiral Plumridge, with the *Leopard*,

* Berkeley to Napier, April.

Impérieuse, *Tribune*, *Dauntless* and *Lightning*, to examine the ice, as well as the anchorage and fortifications at Hango Head, whither he first intended to proceed. Admiral Plumridge was further instructed that, if he made sure that the Russian squadron at Sweaborg was still frozen up, he was to examine Revel; but he was directed to run no risk whatever.

Meanwhile, the pilot difficulty had again arisen. Napier had no pilots acquainted with the Gulf of Finland on board the squadron, and the Danish Government refused to allow its pilots to serve in the British fleet. He, however, informed the Admiralty that by a high rate of remuneration men might be induced to disregard these injunctions, and that, if he were empowered to offer it, he would probably be able to secure the pilots he required. Incredible as it may appear, the Admiralty demurred to the extra expense; and so, for the sake of a trifling economy, the movements of the fleet were retarded and its safety jeopardized in a more difficult navigation than that through which it had passed. The British people, impatient for Napier to strike some decisive blow, little imagined that his time was being wasted and his ships endangered for want of means without which no merchant-vessel would have ventured into the Baltic.

While at Kioge Bay, Napier was joined by the following vessels: the *Archer* (Captain Edmund Heathcote), *Boscawen* (Captain William Glanville), *Cæsar* (Captain John Robb), *Basilisk* (Hon. F. Egerton), *Desperate* (Captain Edward d'Eyncourt), *Magicienne* (Captain Thomas Fisher), *Cruiser* (Commander Hon. G. H. Douglas) and *Driver* (Commander Hon. A. A. Cochrane).

On April 5, the Admiral proceeded to Copenhagen in the *Odin*, for the purpose of inducing the Danish Government to allow him the use of a water-tank for the fleet. This request was refused, but, with considerable difficulty, he succeeded in procuring some water-casks from the Minister of Marine.

While at Copenhagen, Napier paid a visit to the King of Denmark, and was courteously received.

On the 8th, the *Dauntless* returned from Admiral Plumridge's division, with intelligence that he had reconnoitred Sweaborg, and had observed there seven sail-of-the-line and a frigate. He also reported the Gulf of Finland free from ice so far as Sweaborg, and even beyond, so that the rapid movement of the squadron through the Belt was thoroughly justified.

Upon receipt of this information, Napier determined to put to sea without delay, confident that, in the event of the Russians venturing out, he would be able to give a good account of them, notwithstanding that his squadron was still very far from efficient.* As a preparatory step, he wrote to the British Ministers at Berlin, Copenhagen and Stockholm, and our *Chargé d'Affaires* at Hamburg, to announce that the fleet was about to sail for the Gulf of Finland and to place in a state of blockade the whole of the Russian ports in the Baltic and in the Gulf of Bothnia and Finland; and so soon as the vessels which he had despatched to survey the dangerous waters ahead—an operation which, in default of pilots, had to be performed previous to every movement of the ships†—had made their reports, the squadron left Kioge Bay, passing to the northward of Bornholm and the eastward of Gottland (April 12).

On the 14th, the *Archer*, which had been despatched some days before to Stockholm to ascertain the condition of the ice in the Gulfs of Bothnia and Finland, and to endeavour to secure pilots, rejoined the squadron, bringing the only pilot whose services Captain Heathcote had been able to enlist. On the same day, the *Conflict* and *Cruiser* were sent to blockade the coast from

* Had the Russian ships come out, or had he been able to get at them in port, judging from the signal made by Napier to the squadron, notifying it that war had been declared, it was evidently his intention to follow his favourite tactics and "put them by the board."

"Lads, war is declared; we have a bold and numerous enemy to meet. Should they offer you battle, you know how to dispose of them. Should they remain in port, we must try and get at them. Success depends on the quickness and precision of your fire. Sharpen your cutlasses, and the day is your own."

The last sentence of this signal was subsequently turned into ridicule by Napier's enemies, but the Admiralty at the time found no fault with it, as they assuredly would have done had they considered it inappropriate; and there can be little doubt that if Napier had been afforded an opportunity of trying conclusions with the Russian fleet and have proved victorious, this signal would have been lauded to the skies as a notable instance of the blunt, straightforward language of a British admiral, and become well-nigh as popular as Nelson's watchword at Trafalgar. "It was not the Admiral's fault," very justly remarks the author of 'The Campaign in the Baltic,' "that the Russians would not come out to meet him, but it was decidedly the fault of the Government, for not supplying the Admiral with the means of getting at the Russians. Had these been at his disposal, he would have justified the signal, as throughout his career he had justified every signal he had formerly made, and would either have driven the enemy from his shelter or destroyed him within it."

† Had the Admiralty not refused to authorize Napier to offer a rate of remuneration which would have sufficed to secure the services of Danish pilots this time and trouble would, to a great extent, have been saved. As it was, the Baltic Fleet was obliged to assume all the character of a surveying expedition before it could even approach the enemy's coasts.

Libau to the Gulf of Riga;* and on the 15th, the *Archer* was despatched to cruise off Felsand and the *Desperate* to cruise off Dager Ort. Napier then divided the fleet. One squadron, consisting of *Neptune, Royal George, Boscawen, Hogue, Blenheim, Ajax, Euryalus, Dragon* and *Vulture,* he left, under the command of Rear-Admiral Corry, between Dager Ort and Hufvudskor, to intercept all vessels in that direction; while he himself, with the *Duke of Wellington, Edinburgh, St. Jean d'Acre, Princess Royal, Cæsar, Cressy, Impérieuse, Amphion, Leopard, Magicienne, Gorgon* and *Driver,* stood on towards the Gulf of Finland.

On the 16th, it blew a gale, and on the 17th the Admiral stood towards Hango Head, with the intention of running up to Sweaborg on the following day; but the wind coming direct into the Gulf, with a falling barometer, he abandoned his intention.

"In the night," he writes to Sir James Graham, "we tacked every two hours between the shoals off Hango Head and Dager Ort—by no means pleasant cruising ground, with a squadron, not one of whom, with the exception of Chads and Keppel, knew how to keep their station. It is not only discouraging, but dangerous, and I have given up for the moment going into the Gulf of Finland—indeed, on perusing the papers furnished me by Captain Washington of the proceedings of the squadron in 1808–9, it was never thought of till the month of July. The Emperor has taken away all the lights and beacons, and there are no pilots to be had. I hope, however, to secure some from Stockholm.

"You will see that my position is not very agreeable. I will, however, do my best to prevent the egress of any ships from the Baltic.

"I have no certain information about the Aland Islands, nor can I get any—*indeed, they are not approachable without pilots.*

"When the Cronstadt Fleet are free, it is quite possible they might push out a squadron, if they were bold, and get into the North Sea, and we, I think, ought to have a reserve on the coast of England."†

In his reply to this communication, dated May 1, the First Lord approved all the Admiral's movements and intentions, and, in particular, his decision not to proceed to Sweaborg. He told him that, when the whole fleet had assembled, he would have a force sufficient to close the Gulf of Finland, and, as he

* On the 16th, Captain Foote, in the *Conflict,* captured a Russian ship belonging to Riga, and on the following day three more vessels. On the 18th, he landed at Memel to make arrangements for sending his prizes to England, but was unhappily drowned, with four men, owing to his boat capsizing while returning to the *Conflict.*

† Letter of April 18, 1854.

hoped, to prevent the junction of the division of the Russian fleet from Cronstadt with the squadron which had wintered at Sweaborg. The distribution of the force under his command was to be left to his free judgment on the spot; but the close blockade was to be his primary object, and all other operations to be secondary to this. He was directed to judge whether, in the rear of his blockading squadron, he could safely make an attack upon Aland; that much would depend on the strength both of the fortress and garrison of Bomarsund, of which they were as yet imperfectly informed. He advised him that Sweden was well disposed, "but wants subsidies and guarantees which we cannot give her." However, in his opinion, her own interest would eventually compel her to join Great Britain on easier terms. Vain illusion! This was a reason why there was no need to be in a hurry about Bomarsund, which would always be open to attack, if he could prevent the passage of troops from Abo to the Aland Isles. The hope of regaining these islands would be the strongest possible inducement to Sweden to join the Allies, and if Sweden led the way, Denmark must follow. Bomarsund should therefore be closely watched, but the necessity or policy of an immediate attack on that fortress was not apparent. And Sir James continued:—

"In the first instance, you must feel your way and make good your hold in the Gulf of Finland. By this is meant, *that I by no means contemplate an attack on Sweaborg or Cronstadt. I have a great respect for stone walls*, and have no fancy for running even screw line-of-battle ships against them. Because the public may be impatient, *you must not be rash.* Because those at a distance from danger are foolhardy, you must not risk the loss of a fleet in *an impossible enterprise.* I believe both Cronstadt and Sweaborg to be *all but impregnable from the sea, Sweaborg especially; and none but a very large army could co-operate by land efficiently, in the presence of such a force as Russia could readily concentrate. If you have no means but naval at your command*, you must pause long, and consider well, before you attempt any attack on the Russian squadron in their strongholds, and I am afraid they are much too cautious to come out and meet you. . . . Now they will wait and watch an opportunity, in the hope that you will seriously cripple your force by *knocking your head against their forts*, when they may take you at a serious disadvantage, and inflict a fatal blow. These considerations must not be overlooked by you, lest in the eager desire to achieve a great exploit and *to satisfy the wild wishes of an impatient multitude at home*, you should yield to some rash impulse, and fail in the discharge of the noblest of duties—which is the moral courage to do what you know to be right, at the risk of being

accused of having done wrong. It is enough to present that view to your deliberate attention. You will reflect on it, and I am certain that your judgment will not err."*

Sir James Graham, in a letter dated the following day, informs the Admiral that he had reason to know that some of the London newspapers had paid correspondents among the officers of the fleet :

" It is very difficult to check this evil, and I know not how you can control it ; but it is an evil, and a very serious one. And these reporters, who misrepresent as well as comment, produce false impressions on the public mind and render the conduct of warlike operations, whether by sea or land, infinitely more difficult. You are the best judge whether you can correct this mischief or impose any restraint on it. I have called your attention to the subject, and I leave it in your hands."

Napier appears to have known well enough who these newspaper correspondents were. Few amongst them occupied a position in the fleet which entitled them to form a judgment ; the less so, as, from want of experience, they were incapable of comprehending what could, or what could not, have been done ; and, not caring what they said of him, he did not consider it worth his while to interfere in the matter.

" Before leaving England," writes Earp, " he himself had been applied to to permit the presence of a newspaper correspondent on board his own ship,† but had declined, as such a course would have been contrary to the injunctions of the First Lord. It would, perhaps, have been better to have acceded to the request, and the public would have been saved no small amount of misrepresentation."‡

In accordance with his decision to postpone entering the Gulf of Finland until more favourable weather set in—a decision

* The author of the " Campaign in the Baltic " characterizes this letter as " a masterly piece of writing, which has few superiors, even in a literary point of view, and will long remain a monument of Sir James Graham's administrative caution." And he adds : " But it will, at the same time, remain a monument, showing how great administrative ability can afterwards swallow its own injunctions. As far as the conduct of the war goes, no instructions could be more explicit."

† By Delane, the editor of the *Times*. Napier's refusal, no doubt, in part explains the attitude which the journal which Delane controlled subsequently assumed towards him.

‡ It was afterwards ascertained that a person on board the flagship was in communication with a London newspaper.

which had been approved by the First Lord—Napier, on April 21, took his division of the fleet into Elgsnabben Roads, below Stockholm, where there was a good harbour, and where he was presently joined by Rear-Admiral Corry and his squadron.

The correctness of his judgment was abundantly proved, for whilst at Elgsnabben, a succession of fogs and heavy gales set in, which might, had the fleet been in the Gulf, have been perilous in the extreme; and, with no friendly port to run to for shelter, the loss of some of the ships would have only too probably ensued. As it was, he was compelled to remain at this anchorage for a fortnight before the weather improved sufficiently for the squadron to venture out to sea.

During his enforced stay at Elgsnabben, Napier paid a visit to the King of Sweden at Stockholm. It was of the utmost importance to secure the co-operation of Sweden, principally on account of the formidable flotilla of 328 gunboats possessed by that Power, whose assistance would have immensely facilitated the Admiral's task; and there can be no doubt that the expectations of the British Government of any startling success in the Baltic were largely based on the prospect of such co-operation, even, as it would appear, to the neglecting to supply the fleet with gunboats, in the hope that Sweden would supply the deficiency by hers.

Napier was very well received by the King, who paid him the unusual compliment of an invitation to breakfast; but he was not successful in eliciting from His Majesty any decided opinion on political questions, though he did not fail to represent what a great advantage it would be to Sweden to possess the Aland Islands. The King, however, cautiously replied that "neither he nor his people required conquest, even of the Aland Islands. His position was delicate, and he would remain as he was."

On his return to Elgsnabben, the Admiral wrote to Lord Clarendon, informing him of the result of his visit to Stockholm, and observing that "he was not much accustomed to diplomacy," but "had kept in view what he thought were his wishes and acted accordingly."* To this letter, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs replied, under date July 4, that "his visit to

* Letter of April 26, 1854.

the King of Sweden had produced an excellent effect, which was not likely to be thrown away." And he added :—

"We have watched your proceedings with the deepest anxiety, and everybody rejoices that you have had the moral courage to resist impossibilities that could only have been attempted to satisfy the home public."

It was all very well for the First Lord of the Admiralty to warn Napier "not to yield to some rash impulse to satisfy the wild wishes of an impatient multitude at home," and for the Secretary for Foreign Affairs to compliment him, after he had followed these prudent injunctions, on his "moral courage" in resisting the temptation to essay impossibilities, but the Commander-in-Chief of the Baltic fleet was already painfully conscious that he was placed in a most unenviable position. It was clear, from the Government despatches, that he was not expected to do anything beyond maintaining a close blockade of the enemy's ports until the French fleet joined him, unless, indeed, Sweden could be induced to throw in her lot with the Allies—an event of which there appeared no immediate probability. But the Government was not the nation; and the nation, strung up to a high pitch of expectation by the ridiculous flourish of trumpets which had preceded the departure of the fleet from England, was already beginning to turn impatient eyes towards the Baltic. In complete ignorance of the enormous obstacles which he had to encounter, with his ill-manned and ill-disciplined fleet, without a sufficiency of ammunition, without vessels of light draught or gunboats or mortars, without pilots to navigate the ships through those treacherous seas, it was in daily anticipation of hearing that Napier had repeated in the Baltic the triumphs which he had gained on the coasts of Portugal and Syria. Whereas there was no enemy whom he could get at to fight, until after he had silenced the formidable batteries of Sweaborg or Cronstadt, to attempt which, with the inadequate means at his disposal, would be the height of folly, whilst it was impossible to get the enemy to come out and fight him. Only the older and more experienced of his own officers were able to appreciate the difficulties of his situation, which are well expressed in two letters which Captain (afterwards Admiral Sir Henry) Codrington wrote from Elgsnabben. It

may be here observed that there was very little love lost between these two distinguished seamen, so that Codrington's testimony is the more valuable from Napier's point of view :—

"*Royal George*, Elgsnabben,
"April 29, 1854.

"I suppose the warlike public of England, and, of course, its mouthpiece, the warlike press, are expecting to hear that the squadron has taken Cronstadt, burnt or sunk the Russian squadron, and is dictating a peace at St. Petersburg ! ! ! And no doubt when they hear that we have done nothing at all of all this, we shall have them writing us down as cowards —or, at least, as incapables. Ah ! I wish they would come here to the Baltic themselves, and see the circumstances and difficulties, and then try their own hands at them. The very least of our difficulties would be the finding the Russian fleet coming out to meet us. I would willingly bargain for *that*. But I should be very sorry indeed, if, urged on by public clamour, our squadron, either here or in the Black Sea, were engaged in a struggle with batteries. I don't see any advantage to be gained by it beyond the attempt to satisfy the cry of the people 'that live at home at ease' for the blood of those who are fighting *their* battles abroad. But were our squadrons crippled in such a contest with batteries, their fleet might, and probably would, come out and gain a victory over our shattered ships. What a mess that would be ! ! If this squadron fails, England has no reserve ready, and would find some difficulty in beating off from her own coasts a Russian squadron, which—under these disastrous circumstances to us—could easily get out of the Baltic, and pay Leith, the Thames and Portsmouth a visit. For us to attack batteries as such, simply because they have the Russian flag up, would be insane folly ; if there is behind those batteries a Russian squadron, which, by silencing the batteries we can get at, then *that* is another thing. Meanwhile, our presence at their doors has stopped their trade and is detaining at the northern end of their empire an immense body of men which would otherwise have been disposable for overwhelming Turkey. . . . A battle lost *to us* in the Black Sea or in Turkey will be bad enough, but it will not be a tenth part of the disaster that a battle lost here would be to England. If this squadron is crippled by storms, or by the enemy, it will be a sad mess for England."

"May 3, 1854.

"Still at Elgsnabben. . . . I am now wondering what our chief will decide on doing. No doubt he is now feeling the difficulties of his position. I wonder if he ever thinks in his conscience of the difficulties and responsibilities which weighed heavily on a commander-in-chief on the Syrian coast in 1840. You see he is urged on, on the one hand, by the state of excitement and high-wrought expectations into which England has worked herself up about this Baltic squadron, and what great things it is to do ; and especially about him, Sir C. Napier, personally, and what deeds of successful daring he is to accomplish, and, by the bye, no oppor-

tunity has been lost of heightening the public expectation as regards him personally. On the other hand, he now finds himself here brought face to face with difficulties which no one in England (not even the Ministry) have any idea of, and which they, not knowing the circumstances, or seeing the place with their own eyes, cannot imagine. He now sees his own character and the honour of our flag at stake, not to say the safety of the squadron and the protection of the English coasts, if we risk an attack without the certainty of crushing resistance with so little loss to ourselves as to leave all our ships efficient. And, if the English flag, after all this fearful state of excitement at home, does suffer a reverse, then will come the question, 'Who's to be hanged for it?' For in such a case, it will be considered necessary to hang or shoot or morally extinguish SOMEBODY, to appease the indignation of that righteous, ill-used British public, who at their tea and toast, reading the *Times* or *Herald* by the warmth of their comfortable firesides, are sure that it must be all the fault of the admiral, captains or officers; and not at all due to the continual disregard of the earnest warnings given for many years past by our best officers and cleverest heads of the increasing extent and efficiency of Russia's military and naval preparations, and the sad deficiency of ours; of their falsely economical cutting down of so many things virtually requisite to national efficiency, and of their resolutely shutting the public purse, and even the public ear, against those who saw clearly enough the difficulties that would weigh on the nation in such a contest as the present. It is well for us that our contest is not against France instead of Russia.

"Well, now, to answer the question, 'Who's to be hanged?' The Ministry will say that all the means put at their disposal by the House of Commons have been used to the best of their ability, and that they have sent out a fine squadron and a gallant admiral; and that THEY ought not to be hanged: the professional halter being then tendered to the Baltic squadron (that is, to the survivors), it will become a question of the commander-in-chief or his captains. If the commander-in-chief can't fasten it round the neck of any unlucky or any dead captain, who, in the latter case, can't speak for himself (which has before now been a great national convenience), in faith he will have to wear it himself; and I think Sir C. Napier is quite clear-sighted enough to have contemplated such a prospect. Now, I don't think the *Royal George*, or any other ship here, will let herself be gibbeted for public satisfaction, if human endeavours can prevent it. I am sure all of us would far rather be shot by the Russians than hanged physically or professionally by our countrymen, however unreasonable they may be. But our prospects are not of the pleasantest.

". . . As yet we have not got from England one pound of powder or one single shot, though all of us have necessarily been expending ammunition largely in the drilling of our men at quarters."

CHAPTER XXIV

FIRST RECONNAISSANCE OF SWEABORG—JUNCTION WITH THE FRENCH FLEET AT BARO SOUND

ON May 5, the weather having somewhat moderated, the squadron weighed and quitted Elgsnabben, proceeding to sea under steam.

"I flattered myself I should get out safe," writes Napier, "but just as we got into the most dangerous part of the channel, amongst rocks and shoals, a thick fog came on, and we were in the greatest danger. Two or three of the leading ships had cleared the rocks, but the rest were enveloped in a thick fog and could see nothing. There was nothing left for it but to proceed and take our chance, and by the blessing of Providence we all escaped.

"*Cressy* discovered a rock almost under her bows, and just cleared it. *Cæsar* found herself on the wrong side of another, and escaped by a miracle. *Monarch*, who was in tow, broke her hawsers and anchored. *James Watt* went back and succeeded; she was not so much engaged. *Duke of Wellington* hauled through another channel, which Mr. Biddlecombe* had surveyed. The *Austerlitz*† persevered and went on, but I have not seen him to know his story. The *Boscawen* and *Regent*‡ were detained and did not start. When I see the rest of the captains, I will give you an account of them. I have been fifty-four years in the service, and I never saw a fleet in such a position, and no human foresight could have provided against it."§

Having sent Rear-Admiral Corry with his squadron to Gottska Sands, Napier, with six ships-of-the-line, two blockships, two frigates and two paddle-steamers, stood towards Hango Head. His object in thus dividing the squadron was the hope that the

* The Master of the Fleet.

† A French ship-of-the-line, which had recently joined the squadron.

‡ The *Prince Regent*. She had joined at Elgsnabben, with an ill-disciplined crew and neither midshipmen nor master's assistants, and Napier sent a strong remonstrance to the Admiralty in regard to the condition in which she had been sent out.

§ Napier to Graham, May 9, 1854.

disparity of the force under his immediate command to the numbers of the Russian fleet would induce the latter to come out and attack him—an object of far greater importance than that of making idle demonstrations with his whole force within the Gulf and in the midst of fogs. He arrived off Hango Head on May 20, where he received a letter from the Admiralty dated the 2nd, urging him to enter the Gulf of Finland. To this he replied:—

"In their Lordships' letter of the 2nd of May, commenting on a paragraph of my letter of the 19th of April, they appear to think I am going too slow. When I passed the Belt, their Lordships thought I was going too fast.

"I am perfectly aware that steam makes a great difference in naval operations; but steam has no effect on fogs, and has not prevented two collisions, and very nearly a third, which might have disabled half a dozen ships. Their Lordships will have observed, by my last letter, that fogs detained me ten days at Elgsnabben, and a fog was very nearly the cause of the loss of the fleet. It therefore behoves me to be careful, and act with judgment in operations with this fleet. Their Lordships abstain from pressing me to proceed to the upper part of the Gulf of Finland till the state of the weather, and my own judgment, may dictate. Their Lordships may depend I shall go to the upper part of the Gulf when I can; but I must have a sufficient force off Sweaborg, where there are eight or nine sail-of-the-line; and then I must have force enough to take care of twenty sail-of-the-line, besides frigates and steamers. How this is to be done with twenty sail-of-the-line, some of which are perfectly unfit to go into action, I really don't know; but all that can be done I will do."

The Board rejoined, under date June 5, that it had no intention of commenting upon his proceedings, and was unwilling to limit the exercise of his judgment. Their Lordships were satisfied that every exertion on his part had been used, and they continued to confide in his ability and judgment. At the same time, they expressed great regret that some of the ships-of-the-line under his orders were regarded by him as "perfectly unfit to go into action," and "felt surprised that the expression of such an opinion by him had not been accompanied by detailed reports of the state and condition of the ships to which he referred, but did not specify."

Napier replied that he was alluding to the ships which had lately arrived from England and had not fired a shot, and ships in that condition he considered were not fit to fight. With regard to the detailed reports of the state and condition of the

ships not having accompanied his letters, "he begged to observe that he did not conceive that the reports of inspection were sufficiently satisfactory to lay before their Lordships, and waited till he could send a proper report."*

On May 23, Napier wrote from Hango Head to Admiral Berkeley:—

"This is a good anchorage, but entirely exposed to southerly winds. I am lying nearly within range of their batteries. I long to knock them down, but I should lose a good many men, and unless I could hold them, it would not do any good."

From Hango a reconnoitring squadron was sent forward, under the command of Captain Watson, in the direction of Helsingfors, with orders to observe the Russian squadron at Sweaborg, of whose movements, owing to the hazy state of the weather, little information could be obtained. Some intelligence, however, was received as to Cronstadt, to the effect that it contained 10,000 troops, besides the seamen attached to 20 line-of-battle ships, 3 steamers, and 16 small river boats; and that the large ships were moored in couples, head and stern, across the narrow channels, under the works of Cronstadt.

On May 21 a very dashing little exploit was performed at Eckness by the *Arrogant* and *Hecla*, steam frigates, commanded respectively by Captains Yelverton and Hall—the sort of affair in which Napier would have gloried in his younger days.

Having ascertained that three large Russian merchant vessels were loading at Eckness, they made their way up the narrow and intricate channel which led to the town, and carried off one of them—the other two had been run aground—from under the fire of the enemy's batteries. In this affair the Russians showed great bravery, only quitting their guns when they were destroyed by the shot and shell of the steamers. Their casualties must have been very severe; while those of the British only amounted to three men killed and an officer and eight men wounded.

While at Hango Head, Napier received a letter from Vice-Admiral Parseval-Deschenes, announcing the arrival of the French fleet in the Baltic, and expressing a hope of soon joining him.

* Letter of June 16, 1854.

He also received the following letter from his cousin, Sir William Napier, which is interesting, if only for the remarkably candid opinions which the historian of the Peninsular War expresses in regard to Sir James Graham and other members of Her Majesty's Government—opinions which, in the case of the First Lord, subsequent events were to prove only too well justified :—

"May 25, 1854.

". . . . Your situation is just what I expected, but the fogs and shallows are formidable ; however, you will, I trust and believe, get over this in the Baltic ; and over those at home also—the last, I believe, the worst.

" I am not surprised at your doubting Graham ; he has good intentions in the main, but they are only intentions ; he is, physically and morally, a coward, and, of course, deceitful and not to be trusted ; but I believe, if his selfishness does not interfere, means well by you. Lord John [Russell] and others hate you, and, of course, will be glad to have you fail. Aberdeen fears you will hurt his friend Nicholas, and the object of the Whig part of the Cabinet is evidently to keep you down ; they will never be able to unmake you in the opinion of the nation. The name is deep in the hearts of the people, especially the labouring classes, and all the interest attached to it is now centred in you. Amongst the upper classes attempts have been made by fellows under orders to run you down ; but, even then, I know of several instances where they have yet been brought up roughly by strangers to us. The middle class are all with you, expecting perhaps too much from you, but all wishing you well. But it is amongst the labouring men your fame will be secure ; in every cottage they speak of you, and you only. They say they know the Government would hurt you if they could, but that people won't let them. In Paris, also, I am told the *bourgeois* look only to you, and care little about their own admirals.

" My notion of your operations is that, if you get *fleety of good gunboats*,* you will be able to do something by crossing the shallows about their great works, so getting into them behind ; but more than that I fear will not be, unless their fleet becomes plucky, and—as you seem to hope—that the young Grand Duke will be rash, from a desire to distinguish himself. The two Governments should send out 50,000 or 100,000 men for you to land in Finland, and promise the Swedes that they will not make peace unless Finland is restored to them by treaty.

". . . I watch you with the greatest anxiety and have a feeling that something glorious will happen to you. Fortune has carried you through all things to your present position, in despite of the enmity and power of our Governments, Whig and Tory ; and I do not think that has happened for nothing. This feeling should cheer you also, and it will do you good to hear that your avoiding boasts and checking boasting as you

* The italics are our own.

did at the dinner,* and at Portsmouth, has been well noted, and raised you in general esteem, the stupid boasting of the papers having created disgust, and your check was accepted as a proof that you were fit to command.

"Yours ever,
"W. NAPIER."

A memorandum, relative to an attack on Sweaborg, which was sent to the Government, on May 1, by Colonel Jones, of the Royal Engineers, who afterwards joined the Baltic Expedition with the local rank of Brigadier-General, corroborates Sir William Napier's opinion of the necessity of having both gunboats and rockets, with neither of which the fleet had been provided :—

"As the coasts of Finland are generally protected by gunboats, any of the operations carried on against any of the Baltic ports by a naval force should be accompanied by a large flotilla of that description.

"I may be permitted to state, what made a great impression on my mind, at the time I visited the Baltic ports, that every expedition operating against them should be furnished with a large supply of rockets ; although not very accurate in their flight, they are very destructive in their effects, can be easily transported, and can be taken to and fired from many situations, where it would not be practicable to take up a gun of large calibre."

Shortly before leaving Hango Head, Napier received further prudent advice from Sir James Graham, under date May 20 :—

"We hear a good deal," wrote the First Lord, "of submarine barricades, by which the north channel in Cronstadt is closed, and an entrance into Sweaborg out of reach of the defences. Would it be impossible to remove those obstructions by divers, diving-bells, and blasting under water ? In France they have a notion that the batteries at Cronstadt might be turned by floating batteries, heavily armed and specially constructed, with steam-power and light draught of water, to be used at the outside of the south channel, in the shallow water, beyond the reach of the greater part of the defences."

But the First Lord admitted that, "if this construction succeeded and the batteries were passed, he did not see how this flotilla could cope successfully with the Russian fleet of twenty sail-of-the-line, moored ready to receive them."

And he continued :—

* The dinner at the Reform Club, to which reference has already been made.

"If anything can be done, you will discover the best means of doing it; but *no rash experiments** must be tried which do not hold out a reasonable prospect of success. I still think that a complete blockade of the Gulf of Finland must be your first operation, and the occupation, if possible, of an anchorage within the Gulf, where you can command a supply of water. When these objects are secured, you may look at Aland and see what can be done there. The co-operation of Sweden would render the success certain; but I do not see my way to an arrangement with Sweden on terms which are feasible.

"I am anxious to hear your opinion and intentions when you have looked at Sweaborg and have entered the Gulf of Finland. I am afraid that the Russians will not pluck up courage and come out and meet you."

In the same letter Sir James suggests that Napier might be able "to hire small steamers or cutters, either in Sweden or Denmark, to work within the little islands and to meet the enemy gunboats. No arrangement could be so ready or so cheap."

On June 2, the squadron left Hango Bay and the same day anchored in Baro Sound, where there was a lighthouse commanding a fine view of Helsingfors.

On the 10th, the Admiral informed Sir James Graham that he had ascertained that the north passage into Cronstadt was closed by a double row of piles, with granite blocks let in between them; the whole being protected by batteries. He gave it as his opinion that these piles were immovable by diving or diving-bells, so long as they were protected by an enemy. As to the suggestion that floating batteries might be successfully employed against the forts of Cronstadt, a great number would be required, and he agreed with the First Lord that, even if they were able to silence the forts, they would not be capable of contending with the Russian squadron moored in the inner harbour.

On June 9, the squadron again weighed and proceeded up the Gulf of Finland under steam, accompanied by the French ship *Austerlitz*, Napier having first sent orders to Rear-Admiral Corry to join him as quickly as possible. The same evening it was obliged, on account of fog, to anchor off Renskär lighthouse.

The following day, the *Lightning* (Captain Sulivan) and the *Driver*, which had been despatched to the Aland Islands to reconnoitre the forts and the various approaches to them, rejoined the squadron. Captain Sulivan reported that Bomarsund was

* The italics are our own.

very strong. The fortifications consisted of solid granite, with two tiers of guns, and were supported by three round towers. He did not consider that, even if there were sufficient water in the channel which led to it, there would be room for more than two or three ships, which would be inadequate to reduce it; but was of the opinion that a land force might be employed to great advantage, if supported by ships, which for this purpose would find a secure harbour.

The squadron was obliged to remain off Renskär lighthouse until the 12th, when, the weather having improved, it got under weigh again and anchored off Sweaborg, as near the place as it was prudent to approach, since the anchorage was new, and—except from charts obtained from Sweden and as yet untested—indeed, unknown. Here it was joined by the two frigates *Impérieuse* and *Arrogant*, which had been cruising for some time off Helsingfors, to watch any movement on the part of the Russian fleet. The same day Napier wrote to Sir James Graham :—

"I am now at anchor off Sweaborg, where I see the Russian squadron. . . . The Master of the Fleet went in with the *Bulldog*, *Basilisk* and *Driver* steamers and got a very good survey of the passage leading to the entrance of the harbour, where there is a three-decker moored head and stern across to block the passage, and seven sail-of-the-line, a frigate, and several steamers in the harbour behind the island. We hear the three-decker is intended to be sunk in the passage, if an attempt is made to force it.

"The Emperor might have saved himself much trouble, as it is so well fortified by rocks and shoals, *but it is now unassailable by ships, and I doubt whether it could be got hold of, even by a large army.* Admiral Corry anchored his squadron last night in Baro Sound, so that, when I go back, we shall all be together. I shall, I think, wait for the French Admiral, as I think it necessary to see him before I decide on future operations; if Cronstadt is as strong as it is represented, it will be impossible to touch it.

"Therefore, all I can do is to offer them battle, and if they do not accept it, return and see what mischief I can do along shore. I think it unnecessary to send more large ships into the Baltic; the Russians will not come out to fight a large force, but they may come out to fight a small one, and unless you intend to send out troops to make an attack on Aland, I do not see what is the use of more ships."

Then, having informed the First Lord of the report concerning Bomarsund which Captain Sulivan had made, he continued :—

"If 10,000 men could be spared, I think it might be reduced, which would be a great trump, but no time should be lost. You must calculate on a strong garrison to keep it. The Emperor might perhaps send his fleet to endeavour to save it, but he would be cautious of that."

To this communication Sir James Graham replied, on June 20:—

"I am well pleased with all your operations, and the concentration of your force in the Gulf of Finland, in a safe harbour, where you can command fresh water, appears to me a judicious operation. I presume you will leave a squadron before Helsingfors, sufficiently strong to prevent the escape of the Russian squadron skulking within the harbour, and proceed with the rest of the combined fleet to the neighbourhood of Cronstadt, which, I am afraid, you will find unassailable.

"If the Russian fleet will not come out to meet you, and if you find that you cannot reach them, after having well reconnoitred the works, and having ascertained what it is possible and impossible to do, your return to the more open sea below Helsingfors would appear to be a judicious measure, every precaution being taken to prevent the reunion of the Russian forces now divided at Cronstadt and Helsingfors.

"I do not see any great advantage in the capture of Bomarsund, with a serious loss both of ships and men, if Sweden stands aloof and adheres to her neutrality. If she will take a part, with the aid of her troops and gunboats, the capture of the Aland Islands is an easy operation; and the principal benefit will fall to her share, for she alone can hold these islands in defiance of Russia during a Baltic winter.

"I am well aware of all the difficulties of your position, and of the *impossibility* of triumphing over an enemy who will not fight you on fair terms; but *you will discipline our fleet, and make our officers and men fit for any service.* It is a disgrace to Russia that she dares not show a ship in her own waters, and that she is driven to seek for safety under the shelter of her fortresses. It would be madness to play her game, and *to rush headlong on her granite walls*, risking our naval superiority, with all the fatal consequences of defeat, in an unequal contest with wood against stone, which in the long run cannot succeed.

"I had reliance on your prudence, which was doubted. Your brilliant courage was proved long ago; you will now show to the world that you possess a combination of those great virtues which are necessary to make a *consummate commander-in-chief.*"

In the early morning of June 13, Captain Sulivan, in the *Lightning*, joined and reported the arrival of the French fleet off Baro Sound, upon which the British squadron weighed anchor and joined its allies. Admiral Parseval saluted the British squadron, which hoisted French colours and returned the salute, and Commodore Seymour and Mr. Biddlecombe, the

Master of the Fleet, went on board the French flagship to offer the Admiral the use of the British steamers to tow his sailing ships to the anchorage, with which they were unacquainted. These services being accepted, the combined squadron stood into Baro Sound, where they came to an anchor shortly after midday. It consisted of the following vessels :—

FRENCH SQUADRON.

Sailing ships-of-the-line: *L'Infléxible* (flag of Vice-Admiral Parseval), *Hercule, Jemappes, Trident, Le Tage, Duguesclin* (flag of Rear-Admiral Pénaud), *Duperré*, and the screw ship-of-the-line *Austerlitz*. Sailing frigates: *Sémillante, Andromaque, Vengeance, Poursuivante, Virginie* and *Zénobie*. Steam frigate: *Darien*. Steamers: *Phlégéthon, Souffleur, Milan* and *Lucifer*. Total, 19 vessels.

BRITISH SQUADRON.

Screw steamers-of-the-line: *Duke of Wellington, St. Jean d'Acre, Princess Royal, Royal George, James Watt, Nile, Cæsar, Majestic, Cressy, Edinburgh, Blenheim, Hogue* and *Ajax*. Sailing ships: *Neptune* (flag of Rear-Admiral Corry), *St. George, Prince Regent, Monarch, Boscawen* and *Cumberland*. Paddle steamers: *Penelope, Magicienne, Basilisk, Driver, Porcupine* and *Pigmy*. Surveying vessels: *Alban* and *Lightning*. Hospital ship: *Belleisle*. Total, 28 ships. Total combined fleet, 47 ships.

When the French Admiral joined him, Napier ceased to have sole command, except of his own squadron. Sir James Graham had previously instructed him that the supreme command was vested in neither Admiral, but that each would be independent of the other, though acting in concert. Hence, on May 28, the First Lord pointed out to Napier the necessity of cordiality, both as regarded opinion and action :—

"The French fleet will have joined you in large force, and I hope that the most friendly and confidential arrangements will have been established between you and the French Admiral. The conjoint service of the Allied fleet cannot be conducted on any other footing. The supreme command not being vested in either of you, mutual confidence and forbearance must be the rule, and the general plan of operations must be the result of previous concert and deliberation."

"The evil attending instructions of this nature," observes Earp, "whereby divided command was enjoined for an object which required undivided purpose, as emanating from one mind, has been but too often exemplified during the late war, and, indeed, in all wars, whenever it has taken place. . . . It should have been taken into consideration by the Allied Governments, which ought to have provided that either Sir Charles Napier or Admiral Parseval should have assumed the supreme command. Sir Charles Napier, had this course been pursued, would willingly have acted as second-in-command to Admiral Parseval, and no doubt Admiral Parseval would not have considered it derogatory to his professional reputation to have acted as second-in-command to Sir Charles Napier, had the Allied Governments so provided. The experience and the opinions of both Admirals would have been equally available, and their object would have remained the same, though the operations to be undertaken and the mode of conducting these operations might have been different. . . . In the Baltic we had two commanders-in-chief and a general all independent of each other, and therefore without that strict unity of opinion which is indispensable to oneness of purpose.

"Considering the relations of the Allied forces during the whole war, the most natural, and even efficient, division of command would have been that the military force should have been under the direction of the French authorities, while the naval force should have been under the English Admiral; an unity of purpose would thus have been secured, whilst the *amour-propre* of both nations would have been satisfied."

In accordance with their respective instructions, the French and British Admirals lost no time in examining the plans of Sweaborg furnished by the British Government; those which Napier had obtained from different sources in Sweden, whilst at Elgsnabben—which, though far from perfect, were much more correct than the charts with which he had been provided by the Admiralty—and the reports of Rear-Admiral Chads and Mr. Biddlecombe. The result was that, after very careful consideration, both Admirals decided that, without gunboats and mortar-vessels, and without laying down beacons up to the fortifications, which would have been a long process, and could only have been

effected under cover of gun- and mortar-boats, an attack on Sweaborg was perfectly impracticable.

On June 20, Napier wrote to Sir James Graham,* to inform him of what had been done by the fleet and what was capable of being done :—

" I have now before me the Duke of Newcastle's instructions and all your letters. I have carefully studied them, and think I have accomplished them.

" You say ' a complete blockade of the Gulf of Finland ' must be my first operation, as well as the occupation of an anchorage within the Gulf, where I can command a supply of water. That is done. You then wish me to look at Aland, and see what can be done there. That is accomplished also, and I send you the plans by this mail.

" I have also sounded up to Sweaborg, and can take the fleet up to Miolo Roads ; but as for going into Sweaborg, it is quite impossible. The entrance into the harbour, I understand, from several captains of colliers, and from the pilot of the *Majestic*, is not much wider than the length of this ship ; and across the passage a three-decker is placed, ready to be sunk. Besides this, all the beacons are removed, and the smoke alone, without guns, would defend the harbour. *The only way to take Sweaborg would be by a large military force occupying the islands, and throwing shells into it. I send you Admiral Chads's report on the subject.*

" I now come to our future operations. We have three courses to follow. The first is to lie here all the summer, and be content with the blockade of the Gulf of Finland. That won't please the people of England.

" The second is to go to Cronstadt, offer battle to the Russian fleet—which they won't accept—or attempt the harbour. I look on the latter to be impossible. The channel is narrow, very shallow, and the batteries would destroy you if you succeeded in getting into the channel, as only one ship can enter at a time. This information I have on reliable authority.

" The third is to attempt the Aland Isles. To do this, as we have no troops, it would be necessary for the whole fleet to proceed to the anchorage pointed out in Captain Sulivan's chart—leaving vessels in the entrance of the Gulf only, to watch the Helsingfors squadron, land all the marines and the French troops, which would amount to 5,000 men, land a great number of heavy guns and lay siege to Bomarsund, attacking at the same time, in front, if found practicable—if not, landing 10,000 seamen and making soldiers of them. I lean to this, and shall propose it to the French Admiral. If we succeed, it will be a great *coup*. If we fail, we cannot have much loss ; and if the Russian fleet come out to raise the siege, we shall be sure of taking them.

" Whether you like this plan in England, I cannot tell. If it is not decided on—which I do not expect—we shall probably go up to Cronstadt,

* Sir Charles Napier's " Campaign in the Baltic," p. 183.

and that will give the Government time to send us a few troops, if possible; if not, either to sanction or forbid the operation.

"I have no vessels to blockade with higher up the Gulf. I have stationed six from Libau to Odensholm, and across to Hango; four steamers in the Gulf of Bothnia, which is not half enough, as the whole trade will be carried on from Sweden. It takes one to do the duty between this and Dantzig, two frigates and a steamer across from Helsingfors to Revel, and I must always keep three with the sailing fleet, besides the surveying vessels. The French are going to send two frigates off Revel, at my request, but the Admiral will not part with any steamer from his fleet. . . .

"Since writing thus far, I have been on board the French Admiral. He has some doubts about the policy of attacking Bomarsund, as well as the propriety of doing it without troops. He thinks it better to go to Cronstadt first, as it would be of little use going to Bomarsund, unless we attacked it. I have fallen into his views and decided to go to Cronstadt.

"I shall leave Admiral Corry off here with his squadron, two French line-of-battle ships and the *Ajax*, and will go to Cronstadt with the screws, six French ships, and one or two frigates.

"I would much sooner have left the French to guard Helsingfors, but when I hinted as much, I saw that would never do; and, as I am ordered to keep up a friendly communication with the Admiral, it would not do to differ at the first going off. I shall come back as soon as possible, and I hope to find some troops here or that Sweden has consented to assist, for if we do not attack the Aland Islands, I don't see what else we can do."

To this communication Sir James Graham replied, on June 27, that he was glad the Admiral had decided to go to Cronstadt to see with his own eyes what it might be possible to do there.

"Whatever man can do," he continues, "I am certain will be done by you; and if you are restrained by a sense of duty *from embarking in any desperate enterprise*, on your return to Baro Sound you shall receive full instructions from me respecting an attack on the Aland Islands."

Sir James also expressed his approval of Napier having deferred to the wishes of the French Admiral, at the same time giving him cogent reasons why he should continue to do so.

The same day Admiral Berkeley, who had recently become First Naval Lord, also wrote to Napier:—

"*You are giving the Government satisfaction, and the Board, by your general proceedings.* We all feel—no one more than myself—that *nothing can be done against such places as Helsingfors and Cronstadt;* and I have the most full reliance that had anything been possible, you would have attempted it. *They won't come out and you can't get in. At Sebastopol nothing can be done by ships.*"

It may be as well to insert here an analysis of Admiral Chads's report on the fortifications of Sweaborg, dated June 14, 1854 :—

" (1) The fortifications of Sweaborg are built of granite blocks, and are formed on several small islands and rocks united by two bridges. The fortifications are of large extent, mounting 2,000 guns of the largest calibre, and altogether are of enormous strength.

" (2) These fortifications are surrounded by deep-water channels, and command the entrance to the harbour, which is only two or three hundred yards wide. The Russian ships lie, for mutual support, in a line close up to the forts at the entrance.

" (3) From the position and strength of these fortifications, they must be considered as unassailable but at immense sacrifice of life and loss of ships ; and even then an attack would be of very doubtful success, as all attacks on them must be made by ships.

" (4) As no attack can therefore be made on these forts with a fair hope of capture, it remains to be considered how the enemy's ships lying there can be destroyed, as well as the arsenal, and other buildings within the forts.

" (5) I should propose a combined land and sea force posted on the island of Sandhamm, to be supported by the fleet lying outside of the island, with their boats ready, and a steam flotilla within, to guard the various passages against annoyance from the enemy's gunboats. This force should consist of 6,000 troops, and 3,000 or 4,000 seamen and marines.

" (6) The nearest part of Sandhamm lies upwards of 2,500 yards from the fortifications, consequently too distant for any serious interruption to works thrown up upon it. From this point guns ranging 5,000 yards will cover every part of the harbour, and the enemy's fleet would not be secure, but might be destroyed.

" (7) I should propose that forty guns of large calibre, such as are now being constructed, should be prepared, and placed in battery on Sandhamm, with a supply of 250 or 300 rounds of ammunition per gun, which is probably as much as the guns would stand with safety. Similar guns might also be placed on board the steamers, to increase the annoyance to the forts."

From this report it will be gathered that, in the opinion of Admiral Chads, Sweaborg could not have been taken by any means which were then available ; but that with forty Lancaster guns, the ships, arsenal, etc., might be destroyed. At this time, there was not a single Lancaster gun aboard the fleet, though *one* was afterwards brought out by the *Vulture* and put on board the *Edinburgh*. It is then clear that " guns of larger calibre " were not supplied to the fleet, which, therefore, could not be in a condition to destroy the Russian shipping, etc., according to

the plan of Admiral Chads, even if the Admiral had agreed that Sweaborg was assailable. It was this want of means which made the Admirals agree that an attack on Sweaborg was perfectly impracticable. Even on June 27, Sir James Graham writes that "only *eight* Lancaster guns are ready and *very few of the shells;* the experiments are still in progress, and are not complete." These facts should be borne in mind.

As the crews of several of his ships had not yet been completed with seamen from England, Napier, before proceeding towards Cronstadt, despatched the *Porcupine* to Stockholm to enter for the fleet any able-bodied seamen, Swedes or Norwegians, who might volunteer. The orders of Sir James Graham to enter foreign seamen could not, however, be carried out, partly owing to the vigilance of the Swedish and Danish Governments, and partly owing to the unsatisfactory terms which alone could be offered.

On June 20, Rear-Admiral Plumridge came into Baro Sound in order to re-victual his squadron, and reported that during the time he had been on detached service in the Gulf of Bothnia he had succeeded in destroying an immense quantity of the enemy shipping and naval stores. In Brakestead Harbour fourteen vessels, some of them of considerable size, had been burned, together with 25,000 barrels of pitch, etc., and three building yards, with their workshops; at Uleaborg, thirty-one vessels, 50,000 barrels of pitch, a vast quantity of timber and ship building materials, a number of storehouses and workshops and several building yards had been destroyed, the estimated value of which was £300,000, and great damage had also been done on the Island of Ulkonargaick, at Tornea, at Killon Kraseli, on the Kemi River and elsewhere. Plumridge had, however, taken great care not to destroy private property or annoy the inhabitants, by whom, in consequence, he had been well received. He returned to his station the following day, with orders to keep a strict watch on the Aland Islands, and do all he could to prevent the garrison of Bomarsund being reinforced.

CHAPTER XXV

RECONNAISSANCE OF CRONSTADT—CAPTURE OF BOMARSUND

ON June 22, the Allied fleet got under weigh and proceeded towards Cronstadt, leaving Admiral Corry to continue the blockade of Sweaborg with nine sail-of-the-line, one frigate, and five steamers, during the absence of the main body of the fleet; and, at Napier's request, the French Admiral added two frigates to the blockading squadron.

The British squadron proceeded under steam, the French sailing ships being taken in tow by British and French steamers. The combined fleet consisted of twelve English ships-of-the-line and six French, with nine steamers, which were afterwards joined by the *Arrogant* and *Gorgon*.

On the 23rd, Napier sent two steamers to examine the anchorage on the east side of Hogland, intending to anchor there; but Admiral Parseval, being of opinion that Seskar, a small island near the end of the Gulf, would be a better rendezvous, he assented to this arrangement. The Allied fleet accordingly stood towards Seskar, but at 2 a.m. on the 25th it was obliged to anchor off Nerva Beacon, on account of fog. After about three hours, the weather cleared and the fleet again weighed; but, as all the beacons had been removed by the Russians, steamers had to be sent ahead to mark the shoals. These were cleared in safety, and at 10 a.m. the fleet anchored at Seskar, where it was found the enemy had destroyed the lighthouse.

A Russian steamer being observed watching the movements of the fleet, the *Bulldog* was despatched in chase of her, but without effect, as the Russian instantly put about and made for Cronstadt.

The Gulf was becoming narrower as the fleet approached its great *cul-de-sac*. The land on either side was covered with pine-woods, particularly on the Finnish shore, which is the higher of

the two shores, amongst which were open spaces, revealing hamlets and cultivated fields sloping down to the waters of the Gulf.

Whilst off Seskar, Napier wrote to Sir James Graham :—

" I presume we shall offer battle to the Russians, and go back if they do not come out ; and on my return I hope to hear what your intentions are about the Aland Islands. I shall survey Aspo Roads, and, if the anchorage is good, shall go there, and see if there is anything to be done ; but the whole coast is a labyrinth, and not a fit place to knock a fleet about without danger, as we are forced to survey every place we go to, and make beacons of our steamers. . . ."

And to Admiral Berkeley he writes :—

" We came here very well, for the weather was fine. But had that not been the case, the Gulf is not fit to be navigated by a fleet, and we steer from rock to rock, but on dark nights that could not be done without lights. . . . I am sorry to say we have had four cases of cholera in this ship ; it may get worse and be exaggerated, so I tell you, that you may prevent that news from flying, with all the lies that may accompany it. I am very well, except dreadful attacks of cramp in my wounded leg every morning when I wake."

On the 26th the combined fleet again moved forward, sending the steamers *Arrogant* and *Impérieuse* ahead to search for those " infernal machines " with which the approaches to Cronstadt were reported to be thickly studded. The advanced ships soon descried the Russian fleet at anchor. It lay in three columns, and appeared to consist of thirty sail, all safely ensconced within the harbour, and under the guns of the huge forts, which alone presented their fronts, as if in mockery of a force which could not get near them.

As the Allied fleet approached, there was a great stir amongst the Russians ; the steamers got up steam, and all seemed on the alert to meet an attack, should the enemy come within range. Of that, however, there was little danger, as the large ships-of-the-line could not have floated in, and there were no other vessels with which an attack could have been attempted. At 2 p.m. the combined fleet came to an anchor about eight miles from Tolboukin lighthouse, and on the following day a very complete reconnaissance was carried out by Captain Sulivan, in the *Lightning*, who anchored at about 3,000 yards from Fort

Risbank and made a careful examination of the south side of the fortress, after which, notwithstanding that it was blowing very hard, he proceeded to the north side and examined that also.

The total force observed by Captain Sulivan was twenty-two ships-of-the-line, five frigates, four corvettes, seven paddle-steamers, and twenty-five gunboats, the rest being out of sight behind the defences. These, together with the guns of the fortress—the strongest in the world—were opposed to the Allied fleet, consisting of eighteen ships of the line and eleven steamers, but without gunboats or mortar-boats of any description.

On the 28th, the fleet was much surprised at the approach of the *Hecla* (Captain Hall), from Admiral Plumridge's squadron, with the signal flying, " Bomarsund has been successfully bombarded." On the *Hecla* coming to an anchor, it was found that this " successful bombardment " amounted to that vessel, aided by the *Valorous* and *Odin*, having, without orders, pounded the fortress for eight hours on the 22nd, at the end of which they were obliged to withdraw, as nearly all their ammunition had been expended.* Napier was exceedingly annoyed at this affair, for he feared that it might cause the Russians to reinforce Bomarsund, while the expenditure of ammunition was a very serious matter, at a time when he was receiving repeated injunctions from home to be sparing of shot and shell for practice, as the Board of Ordnance had only a limited supply—a lamentable proof of our unprepared condition for war, though actually engaged in it. Sir James Graham expressed himself very strongly to Napier upon the subject, though in Parliament he praised the conduct of Captain Hall, the fact being that the action was a kind of godsend to the Government at the moment, for the public was becoming impatient at what it was pleased to consider the inactivity of the Baltic fleet, and, provided something was done, it was not disposed to be over particular in inquiring how or where, or whether by order or not.

On the 30th, the Allied Admirals made a personal reconnaissance of Cronstadt, the British Admiral going in the *Driver*,

* It was in this action that a remarkable instance of courage and presence of mind was shown by Midshipman Lucas, of the *Hecla*, who picked up and threw overboard a live shell which had fallen on board that vessel.

the French in one of his own steamers. On his return, Napier reported to Sir James Graham as follows :—

"July 1, 1854.

"The French Admiral and myself had yesterday a close reconnaissance of Cronstadt, and I send you the drawings made by Lieutenants Nugent and Cowell, which are very correct and quite agree with the different plans sent me at various periods by the Admiralty.

"You will see by them that any attack on Cronstadt by ships is entirely impracticable. In going in to the south, the batteries are most formidable—all constructed of solid masonry: they are three and four-deckers, of stone instead of wood, and ships going in would be raked by them the moment they came under fire, and would be sunk before they reached the ships, which are placed with their broadsides bearing also on the passage. The channel is narrow, and we had in running in a quarter less five, four miles from the ships, hardly enough for the *Duke of Wellington*. I conclude there would be less higher up, and it is most probable that there is only room for one ship, so that the chances are they would be sunk one after the other, or, if the smoke from the guns and from the funnels were dense, they would miss the channel and go ashore. All attack from the southward by ships is, therefore, out of the question; and it does not appear to me necessary to lay down infernal machines, which by all accounts they have done. The first day it was examined something was seen under water, which was swept for and Chads hooked it; at first we thought we had one, but it turned out to be a beacon which had got adrift.

"In addition to the drawings, I send you a chart with the distances set off in circles, to show the possibility of an attack by *gunboats* throwing shells 5,000 yards, provided the enemy let you alone.

* * * * * * * *

"I now turn to the north side of Cronstadt. That is certainly the weakest point. A landing might be made on the island of any number of men and the town might be besieged. But you must expect the Russians will always outnumber you, and, if you fail, your army would be lost, whilst, if you succeed, it would probably be starved during the long winter. I presume, therefore, that will not be thought of. It may, however, be bombarded."

For an effective bombardment Napier calculated that *fifty gunboats* would be required, and that it would be necessary for them to be furnished, not only with an abundance of shells, but with a great number of rockets of the largest size.

He concludes :—

"I have drawn up this statement with great care, and I think you may depend upon it. I took Admiral Chads in with me, and he quite agrees

with me. I have thought it best to send this and all the drawings to you privately. The engineer officers deserve credit for the drawings and the assistance they have given me. I send Sulivan's report to the Admiralty, on which you may rely.

" I am sorry to say the cholera is increasing, and as I presume it is no use staying here any longer, we shall move probably to Aspo.

" I shall have that part of the coast examined, and I think the French Admiral will take the south.

" P.S.—The best plan of attacking Cronstadt would be by beginning with St. Petersburg. You might land an army either to the north or south, and march on it ; but it must be an army that they could not meet, and you must not have a reverse, otherwise, it would become a campaign as disastrous as Buonaparte's."

To the Board of Admiralty Napier wrote on the same day as follows :—

" I have to request you will inform their lordships that the combined fleets arrived at Cronstadt on the 26th ultimo, after anchoring one night at Seskar.

" I have, in conjunction with the French Admiral, well reconnoitred Cronstadt, and I find, on inspection, that it agrees so much with the different plans sent by the Admiralty, that I have nothing to add except that the difficulties of approach are great, and the batteries are so very strong, that any attack upon Cronstadt *with our means* appears to me perfectly impossible, and I believe the only way to attack Cronstadt is by a large army landing on the coast, and beginning with St. Petersburg. I enclose Captain Sulivan's report. I sent him in several times, and think his is the most correct report of any I have had, and it agrees pretty nearly with our own observations."

On July 11, Sir James Graham and the Board replied to Napier's communications, both expressing their unqualified approval of the decisions at which he had arrived, in conjunction with Admiral Parseval :—

" Your report, together with Captain Sulivan's plan," wrote the First Lord, " is a clear and very able exposition of the strength of the arsenal and of the extreme difficulty and uncertainty of an attack, even if sustained by a large force of gunboats and of troops, *which are not at present at your disposal.* I had anticipated your return to the westward, after an offer of battle, which I felt certain the enemy would decline ; and it now remains for you to blockade the Gulf of Finland, to keep the fleets at Cronstadt and Helsingfors disunited, and to await the arrival of the French troops, when you and the French Admiral and General must deliberate on the operations to be undertaken by the combined forces.

" Bomarsund will clearly be within your reach. Sweaborg, if it were

possible, would be a noble prize, but on no account be led into any desperate attempt, and, above all things, avoid the least risk of the Russian fleet slipping out of the Gulf of Finland when your back is turned. . . .

" I am afraid that we shall not be able to send the whole of the 9,000 French troops to the Baltic on Friday next, as I had hoped a day or two ago ; the transports are not quite ready, but I still am confident that the whole number will be assembled at Faro on the 6th of August.

" Sweden will not move unless Austria goes to war with Russia, and Austria still hesitates and hangs back. With 50,000 Swedes and 200 Swedish gunboats you might do something great and decisive before the end of September."

The Board of Admiralty wrote that, having given their best attention to the " able and well-executed survey that Napier and his officers had made of the fortifications and approaches to Cronstadt," it had " full confidence in his judgment and placed complete reliance in his report." He had " offered the enemy battle at the mouth of his *impregnable fortifications*, of which opportunity he was not inclined to avail himself." It would now be for the Admiral to seek for other points where " he might be more vulnerable, and to cause him all the annoyance possible upon his own shores and in his own waters."

Napier was further instructed that the great object in view, since " the enemy dared not meet him in fair fight, was to render his fleet useless by confining it to its moorings within the fortified harbours."

It may here be remarked that this despatch of the Board of Admiralty bears the signature of Admiral Dundas, Napier's successor in the command of the Baltic fleet. It is thus evident that Admiral Dundas was satisfied that nothing could be effected against Cronstadt, or that the Admiralty was not in a position to furnish Napier with the necessary means. Yet, in the following campaign, with far better means than were at Napier's disposal, he did not think himself warranted in attacking Cronstadt—a fact which ought to be pretty decisive on the matter.

There can be, indeed, no reasonable doubt that the decision of the British and French Admirals that an attack upon Cronstadt " with their means " was perfectly impossible was the only one at which they could have arrived. It should also be borne in mind that not only was the Allied fleet altogether without gunboats, mortars and rockets, by which alone the fortress could

have been effectively assailed or even got at, but that there was only a few hours' supply of shell on board the ships, and that when this was expended the attack must have ceased, and the Allies would have been at the mercy of the Russian ships, with an abundant supply. But the fleet could not, from its draught of water, have got at the fortress, so that the damage which it would most certainly have sustained would have been out of all proportion to that which it could have inflicted. Had an attack been attempted, it would have been "playing the Russian game," against which Sir James Graham had so emphatically cautioned Napier, telling him that to do so would be "an act of madness."

The Board of Admiralty, in its collective capacity, was, as we have just seen, of precisely the same opinion, and both the Senior and Junior Naval Lords expressed their approval privately :—

"Your survey of Cronstadt, and your judgment and *discretion*—I don't mean to play on that word—are highly approved," wrote Admiral Berkeley. "You have had a difficult part to play, every tomfool expecting you to eat Cronstadt and the Emperor to boot. I believe the Government are perfectly satisfied with your proceedings, and I can only say that you deserve every credit for the manner in which you have handled your fleet in such waters. The world—the public—don't know what it is to command an inexperienced fleet—I may say officers and men, on such a service, in such a sea—much more trying to the nerves than any general action."

And Captain Milne wrote :—

"The entrance and forts of Cronstadt are evidently too strong for you to make any attempt. The only thing which appears to me worthy of consideration is an attempt to burn the town, etc., by means of rockets from the north side of the island; but it would require a large number of small vessels of light draft of water. It is rather disheartening to go away from before the enemy's fort, but it is *sound discretion* to do so."

Lord Bloomfield, our Ambassador at Berlin, wrote to the Admiral in the same strain :—

"I am glad to know your opinion of Cronstadt. I have always thought it impregnable. Without a land force, under no circumstances could it be taken and the fleet and dockyard destroyed, without heavy loss. I

fear that the gunboats which are being built for you will be ill-calculated to your work, and that they will draw by far too much water to render their services available."

Such was the opinion of the heads of the Admiralty, such was the opinion of a diplomatist who was in a position to ascertain the views of foreign naval experts regarding Cronstadt. And yet, as we shall presently see, there were not wanting presumptuous and imperfectly-informed persons who persisted in the belief that Cronstadt *was* assailable, even with the means that Napier had at his disposal, and did not hesitate to attribute his " sound discretion " in refusing to risk the destruction of the Allied fleet, in order to inflict some trifling damage on the fortress, to the fact that " his nerve had failed him."*

As nothing could be effected at Cronstadt, and as the cholera continued its ravages in the Allied fleet, over one hundred deaths having already occurred, the two Admirals decided that it was desirable to remove as quickly as possible down the Gulf. Accordingly, on July 2, the fleet left its anchorage before Tolboukin, and on the same day anchored at Seskar, where it remained three days, during which the health of the men showed a marked improvement. On the 5th, it again weighed and stood in for Admiral Corry's squadron off Helsingfors, which it fell in with in the early morning of the 6th. Admiral Corry came on board the *Duke of Wellington*, and reported that he had ascertained that mines had been laid in the channel at the entrance to the harbour, across which chains were stretched in both passages. He had also learned that there were 2,000 troops at Helsingfors, and 8,000 at Sweaborg, besides some 20,000 or 30,000 in the neighbourhood, so that on the arrival of the French troops they would be no match for the formidable force in and around one of the strongest fortresses in Europe.

The British squadron then proceeded to Baro Sound, the French following. On the way the *Duguesclin* unfortunately got ashore, but by the assistance of the British vessels she was floated off again, though not until after a lapse of eighteen hours.

At Baro Sound much time was lost in waiting for the expected instructions from the Admiralty relative to the suggested attack on the Aland Islands. Napier, with his usual activity, succeeded

* See Delane's letter of October 4, 1854, p. 300 *infra*.

in turning the delay to account by exercising the fleet in such evolutions as would shortly become necessary. Every day boats were armed and manned and exercised in divisions, the French doing the same. The marines were sent on shore under Colonel Graham, and the seamen were provided with scaling ladders, with which they practised upon the lighthouse at Renskär. Sham fights were also organized, and every possible kind of instruction given which might be of use, in the event of the arrival of orders directing an attack upon Bomarsund.

About the middle of July the instructions, dated the 2nd of the month, arrived.

"The Cabinet," wrote Sir James Graham, "has taken into consideration the statement contained in your private letter to me of the 20th ult., from Baro Sound. . . .

"We have collected also from the various reports that, with 10,000 men, Bomarsund and the Aland Islands may be taken; *and being of opinion that the presence of the Allied fleet in the Baltic must be marked by some result*, we determined to propose to the Emperor of the French to send them forthwith 6,000 soldiers; and these, in addition to your marines and to the troops now on board the French line-of-battle ships, will raise the effectual military force at your disposal to 10,000 men.

"The two Governments have arranged these measures in consequence: on the 14th of this month, 6,000 French soldiers, with ten guns, fifty horses and caissons, will be embarked on board British ships of war and transports, for conveyance either to Baro Sound or Faro, as may be thought most expedient. I incline to the latter place, an attack on Bomarsund being the first object, unless, indeed, you agree with the Emperor that Langhorn is assailable, in which case Baro Sound must be the rendezvous and Sweaborg the object at which we must aim.

"I am disposed to begin with Bomarsund, but you and the French Admiral must decide; your success there may be reduced to certainty, and it will be the first hard blow in the battle. Moreover, while Sweden is hesitating, France and England will have gained a possession without her aid which she might have won for herself, and which to her is of inestimable value. *She must become our suitor when we hold Aland, and we shall be enabled to command her future assistance on our own terms.*"

Always this harping on the probability of Sweden being induced to join the Allies by the bait of the Aland Islands! "With 50,000 Swedes and 200 Swedish gunboats, you might still do something great and decisive before the end of September," the First Lord tells Napier in a subsequent letter, already cited.*

* See p. 313 *supra*.

From a lithograph by E. Desmaisons, dated January, 1842.

SIR JAMES GRAHAM.

(To face p. 316.

LADY NAPIER
(Countess Napier St. Vincent).
Wife of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.

[To face p. 312.

And yet, when Bomarsund was captured, Sweden, so far from becoming "the suitor of the Allies," and being willing to co-operate with them "on their own terms," refused to accept it on any terms at all, from fear of compromising herself! How much better would it have been for the British Government, if, instead of clinging to these illusive hopes, it had bestirred itself and supplied the means whereby the fleet might have done something "great and decisive" without the aid of Sweden.

The fleet had been sent to the Baltic without gunboats and without vessels of light draught, though the Government had been warned weeks before war broke out by our Ambassador at St. Petersburg that the latter would be urgently required in these waters, because it counted on Sweden supplying the deficiency. And when, after Napier's visit to Stockholm in May, it became apparent that the co-operation of Sweden could not be obtained, except with great difficulty and after long delay, it should have looked the facts in the face, and not have waited until the nation had become clamorous and the Admiral was without means to satisfy its demands. It had now become necessary to attack Bomarsund, which, had the fleet been properly equipped, might have been a secondary object, by way of satisfying popular clamour, and in the hope of using it as a bait to secure the assistance of Sweden.

On receipt of his instructions, Napier despatched two additional steamers to Admiral Plumridge, in the Gulf of Bothnia, with orders to do everything possible to prevent troops and provisions being thrown into the Fort of Bomarsund, and to gain all information he could gather about the north passage leading to it.

On July 4, Sir James Graham directed the Admiral to send one or two of his surveying vessels, to help the line-of-battle ships which were to convey the French troops through the Belt; adding that, if he could appoint an officer who "knows your own way of threading dangers, which has been so successful, it would be of great service."

In accordance with these instructions, Napier despatched the *Bulldog* on this service, her commander, Captain W. K. Hall, having previously piloted the French fleet through the Belt.

In the same letter the First Lord informed the Admiral that

Colonel Jones, of the Royal Engineers, would be sent with the rank of Brigadier-General, to aid him in communicating with the French military authorities, and that he would bring with him a detachment of sappers and miners. This officer would be ready to serve in different ships, as the exigencies of the service might require. Sir James hoped that the military expedition would be ready to sail from the Downs on July 16, so as to join the fleet on August 1.

On July 10, Napier wrote to the First Lord, informing him that the French Admiral and he were agreed that an attack upon Langhorn would not advance us at Sweaborg; whilst Hango was useless, now that the combined fleet was in occupation of Baro Sound. So soon as Bomarsund was taken, he proposed to turn his attention to Abo, which Sir James had recommended him to have examined and watched.

On July 18, the combined squadron again weighed anchor and stood to sea, leaving only the *Impérieuse* and *Dragon* in Baro Sound. The fleet formed order of sailing in three columns, and the rendezvous was appointed at Ledsund. On the evening of the 19th the ships anchored to the north-east of Bogskaren Beacon, and the *Lightning*, *Alban*, *Driver* and *Basilisk* were sent forward to buoy the passage to Ledsund.

On the following day, the *Lightning* returned with intelligence that the surveying vessels had discovered a practicable passage round Lagskaren Lighthouse, a short distance from Ledsund, and also a safe entrance to the Aland Islands. On the 21st, Napier informed Admiral Parseval of this, and that it was his intention to get under weigh at once, Captain Sulivan leading in the *Lightning*. He requested the French Admiral to follow.

Rear-Admiral Corry, at this juncture, shifted his flag into the *Dauntless* and sailed for England, ill-health having obliged him to request permission of the Admiralty to withdraw from the arduous duties which devolved on him as second-in-command of the fleet. He had fulfilled these duties in a most efficient manner and to Napier's entire satisfaction. Commodore Martin, of the *Nile*, was placed in command of Corry's squadron, with which he was ordered to proceed to the Gulf of Finland, to watch the Sweaborg squadron and to maintain the blockade which had been established. He was further directed to send ships up the Gulf, to observe the motions of the Russian squadron

at Cronstadt ; to give the Admiral notice should they attempt to move, and, in case of necessity, to fall back on the main body of the fleet at Ledsund. The Gulf squadron consisted of the *Nile, Royal George, Cæsar, Cressy, St. George, Prince Regent* and *Austerlitz.*

Napier had asked Admiral Parseval to undertake the charge of watching the Sweaborg squadron ; but, as the troops expected at Bomarsund were all French, the latter had declined, nor was he willing to leave any of his squadron in the Gulf of Finland, except the *Austerlitz.*

Towards noon on the 21st, Napier, after having despatched instructions to Commodore Grey, who commanded the ships of war and transports bringing the French troops from Calais, to join him at Ledsund, gave the signal to weigh, and the British squadron proceeded towards Ledsund, the French following shortly afterwards. In running through the passage which Captain Sulivan had discovered, the soundings were very irregular and, indeed, alarming ; sometimes, with one cast of the lead from eighteen fathoms to eight, no notice of which appeared on the charts.

In the course of the afternoon, Admiral Plumridge joined with the *Leopard, Valorous, Locust, Cuckoo* and *Hecla,* the last-named vessels being sent to point out the passage to the French ships. At 9 p.m. the fleet anchored at Ledsund, the *Duke of Wellington* leading, where it was soon afterwards joined by the *Valorous, Locust* and *Zephyr,* which Plumridge had despatched to watch the passage between the Aland Islands and the mainland.

On the 22nd, Admiral Chads was ordered to proceed to Bomarsund, with the *Edinburgh, Hogue, Blenheim, Ajax, Lightning, Amphion* and *Alban,* to commence an investment of the place. At the same time, Admiral Plumridge was sent to the northward of Bomarsund, with his steam squadron, to intercept any succours which might reach the forts in that direction.

A large Russian force had assembled at Abo, for the purpose of reinforcing the garrison of Bomarsund ; but the movements of the fleet had been too rapid to permit of this being done ; and Admiral Plumridge having succeeded in finding a passage to the northward of Bomarsund, where ships might be placed to extend the line of the blockade, the fortress was completely cut off.

During the night armed boats from the ships were sent in under the batteries to sound and reconnoitre, while the masters were employed in sounding for a passage outside Michelso, so as to command the whole navigation of the island. In this they were successful, a practicable passage for steamers being found, as well as a landing-place for the troops.

At noon on the 22nd, the French squadron joined the British. The same evening the *Duperré* ran aground, but the launches and barges of both fleets having been sent to her assistance with anchors and cables she was speedily got afloat again.

On the 24th, Napier received a letter from Sir James Graham, dated the 18th, informing him that 5,000 French troops had sailed for the Baltic on the 16th in four British line-of-battle ships, under the command of Commodore Grey; that on the 19th six transports and the *Prince*, a large iron steamer, with two war steamers in attendance, would leave Calais with a second division of 4,000 French troops, and that two French line-of-battle ships, with artillery, engineers, and all the materials necessary for a siege, would leave Calais about the same time. The First Lord added that General Baraguay d'Hilliers, the French general-in-command, would proceed in Napoleon III.'s yacht to Faro by way of Stockholm, and "he doubted not that he would use every endeavour to induce the King of Sweden to throw aside his neutrality and to declare at once in favour of the Allies." He feared, however, that so long as Austria hesitated, Sweden would hang back, and "that the moment for decisive action would pass away." Nevertheless, he was of opinion that, even without the aid of Sweden, Bomarsund might be taken by the French division with the assistance of a detachment from the combined fleet.

From this letter it appeared very clear that, in the event of the representations of General Baraguay d'Hilliers failing to produce any effect on Sweden, nothing further than the destruction of Bomarsund was expected by the British Government.

On the 28th, Napier communicated to the French Admiral the instructions he had received relative to Bomarsund, and the opinions of both were unanimous as to the course to be pursued. On the 30th, the squadron of line-of-battle ships conveying the 5,000 French troops which had left Calais on the 16th arrived at Ledsund, under the command of Commodore

the Hon. F. Grey; and on the 31st General Baraguay d'Hilliers arrived from Stockholm, in the Imperial yacht, the *Reine Hortense*, his efforts to induce the Swedish Government to intervene having, as Napier had foreseen, been without success. In the course of the day the general visited the British Admiral on board the *Duke of Wellington*, the crew of which manned yards and saluted him with fifteen guns on his departure.

On the same day, as the French ships which had left Calais on the 19th with the stores, artillery, etc. for the siege had not yet made their appearance, and nothing could be done until they arrived, Napier wrote to Sir James Graham :—

"The season is far advanced, and we must be quick; and, as for ulterior operations, that is out of the question. Sweaborg is not to be taken by a handful of men, were we to begin in June instead of the beginning of August; and about the middle of September we must be pointing south. These seas cannot be played with with fleets of large ships."

On August 1, General Baraguay d'Hilliers proceeded, in the *Reine Hortense*, in company with Admiral Parseval, to reconnoitre Bomarsund, Napier and General Jones joining them in the *Lightning*. The fortifications having been very closely inspected, the Allied commanders returned to the fleet. On the 2nd, the *Termagant* (Capt. Hon. Keith Stewart) arrived, in company with a transport laden with troops.

On the 3rd, as no more French troops had made their appearance, and everything was, in consequence, at a standstill, Napier wrote to Sir James Graham :—

"The two French battle-ships, with the stores, *matériel*, etc., for a siege, are not come, and the last I heard of them they were at Kiel; what they are doing there I don't know, or how long they will remain; but it is most serious; the summer is passing, and every hour is precious. The French General will not land and occupy a position till the *matériel* arrives. Getting up breaching guns will be heavy work; the sailors can do it, but it will require time. Ships can do nothing against granite walls, and the anchorage is covered by three towers, which will knock them to pieces. If they took up a position, there they must remain, for retiring is out of the question; there is not room to turn. If the Russians can hold out till the weather gets bad, we shall be in a mess. All that can be done I will do, but this delay kills me. What the transports were ordered to Kiel for, having all the stores on board, God only knows; but they appear to have forgotten that this is August, and we are in latitude 60° 10'!"

On the 5th, the French squadron, which consisted, in addition to the transports, of two ships-of-the-line, two frigates and four steamers, arrived, bringing the remainder of the troops, the heavy guns and other material for the siege. The *Vulture* also arrived from England, with *one* Lancaster gun, which was placed on board the *Edinburgh*. On the following day Napier received information from Rear-Admiral Martin,* in command of the squadron which had been despatched to the Gulf of Finland, that the Russian squadron at Cronstadt had made no movement, nor with the westerly wind which prevailed could it do anything. There was therefore little likelihood of the Russian fleet attempting any diversion; nevertheless, Napier judged it prudent to leave the larger ships at Ledsund, in order to support Admiral Martin, in the event of his being attacked by the combined Sweaborg and Cronstadt squadrons, and to take to Bomarsund only the battle-ships of the least draught of water; indeed, the three-deckers could hardly have been brought near enough to the enemy's works to bring their guns to bear upon them with effect.

We should perhaps have mentioned before that the Aland Islands consist of a group of 280 rocks and islets, less than one-third of which were at this time inhabited. These islands had belonged to Sweden until 1809, in which year they were taken possession of by Russia, and, doubtless with the intention of furthering his designs upon that State, the Emperor Nicholas had constructed on the largest island the fortress of Bomarsund—so-called from Bomar Sund, or strait, which separates Aland from Presto.

"The fortress itself," writes Earp, "formed the segment of a circle, being a chord about a quarter of a mile in length, and presenting to the roadstead a casemated battery in two tiers. The system of defence was made complete by a series of works commencing on the heights behind, and continued across the water by a chain of small islands to the island of Presto, which forms the other side of the channel. The fort to the north was called Fort Nottich, and that to the south the Tzee Fort."

On the 6th, Mr. Biddlecombe, the Master of the Fleet, was, with the masters of several other ships, despatched to reconnoitre

* Commodore Martin had lately been promoted to the rank of Rear-Admiral.

the approaches to Bomarsund. He did so to within 600 yards of the great fort and placed buoys on the extremity of a shoal extending from the west shore. Whilst so engaged, he was fired upon from the fort, as well as from the Island of Presto, a shell bursting alongside his boat and piercing it in two places. One or two of his men were also hit by musketry, but no material damage was done.

At 1 p.m. on the 7th, the French troops began embarking in the steamers, which by seven o'clock in the evening were all at anchor off the west tower of Bomarsund.

The landing of the troops was effected at daylight on the 8th, and that most admirably, " without so much as a wet foot."* Besides General Baraguay's force, there were 2,000 French marines, a battalion of our marines, and 200 British sappers and miners—all placed under the orders of Brigadier-General Jones. The former landed at two points to the southward of Bomarsund ; the marines and engineers on the north side of the fortress. No opposition was encountered, a seven-gun battery on Transwig point, in advance of the great fort, having been silenced in forty minutes by the fire of the steamers *Amphion* and *Phlégéthon*.

The whole force now began erecting batteries, preparatory to opening a systematic attack on the advanced tower. The French skirmishers pushed their way to the village of Finby, and the main body bivouacked on the surrounding heights ; while the British force simultaneously constructed sandbag batteries on the summit of a hill which commanded the eastern fort, or, as it was called, Fort Nottich. Great credit was due to General Jones and the other officers of engineers for the masterly way in which the work was carried on throughout the night, under a heavy fire from the enemy ; and the splendid spirit with which the seamen and marines laboured may be gathered from the fact that they were required to fill no less than 5,000 sandbags, each of which had to be carried on the shoulders of the men up a precipitous height. The fascines, gabions and ammunition had to be brought up in similar fashion.

The fleet was anchored below in Lumpar Bay, Napier's flag flying on the *Bulldog*. When the landing was completed, the

* Earp : " Sir Charles Napier's Campaign in the Baltic."

Admiral pushed the *Bulldog* and *Stromboli* up a creek, where he could obtain a full view of all that was going forward.

The next operation was the landing of the guns to complete the batteries, which devolved on Rear-Admiral Chads. Their disembarkation took place on the morning of the 10th, each ship having previously prepared two sledges, after a pattern made by Captain Ramsay, of the *Hogue*. Upon these sledges were placed the guns, with their carriages and gear, and 150 men attached to each sledge, under the command of Captain Hewlett, of the *Edinburgh*. The operation began at 5 a.m., and by ten o'clock the first batch of guns had been dragged over four and a half miles of what Admiral Chads described as " execrable ground, the greater portion of which was steep, rocky hills and ploughed fields," into the British camp.

" The exertion of the seamen and officers," writes Earp, " caused no small astonishment in the French encampment, the French loudly cheering the bluejackets in passing; and, in some of the more difficult ascents, voluntarily seizing on the drag-ropes and lending a hand with a will not second to that of the seamen themselves.

" On arriving in camp, the men were much exhausted by the great amount of fatigue they had undergone, and the majority lay down on the ground to rest, while others prepared their dinners. Their rest was of short duration, for an order arrived to embark immediately, the *Penelope* having got ashore under the guns of the great fort, and the services of the men being required on board their respective ships, in case their aid should become necessary.

" Fatigued as were the men, the order was received with loud cheers, and, forgetting their previous exertions and their dinners, they, disdaining the comparatively safe way they had come, took a short cut within range of the fire of the fort, which they happily escaped, and reached their boats in three-quarters of an hour."

The *Penelope* was obliged to throw her guns overboard before she could be floated off, and her hull was considerably damaged by the enemy's red-hot shot; while two of her crew, together with a French officer who was on board, were killed.

On the 11th, more guns were conveyed to the British camp in the same fashion, although on this occasion the parties

attached to each of Captain Ramsay's sledges were increased to 200, and they were accompanied by the bands of the ships from which they were drawn, so that the march resembled a triumphal procession. To duly appreciate the services of our gallant tars, it should be borne in mind that the "execrable ground" over which they drew the guns had to be traversed *barefooted*, as the shoes that had been sent out for the use of the squadron were nearly all unserviceable, from being too small.* In complimenting Admiral Chads, his officers and men on their work, Napier declared that "in the course of his service he had seen guns moved in different places, but never on such roads, and to such a distance, as in the present instance; the cheerfulness and exertions of the men were wonderful."

The French, having an abundance of artillery, did not require any of the ships' guns. Their siege artillery and *matériel* was moved up very easily, as they had no fewer than 80 horses and about 500 engineers.

The Russians now burned everything that was inflammable in the neighbourhood of the forts and appeared to be preparing for a resolute defence. Deserters from the garrison reported that fifty gunboats, with reinforcements, were expected. Fortunately, these did not make their appearance, since the Allies had not nearly sufficient steamers to guard the various channels amongst the islands.

General Jones, by advancing beyond his outposts, was able to reconnoitre the ground in front, and get under cover within 800 yards of Fort Tzee, whence he had also a good view of the north tower of the fortress. He reported the locality here favourable for the erection of breaching batteries; and General Baraguay d'Hilliers and General Niel, the officer in command of the French engineers, having themselves reconnoitred the ground, decided on placing their own batteries against Fort Tzee, leaving Fort Nottich to the British.

* In the *Edinburgh* alone, Admiral Chads had nearly a month before made a demand for shoes for his men, to replace others sent back to England, as being useless from their small size. The Admiralty had sent out, instead of these, 98 pairs of shoes only, of which 85 pairs were too small for issue, thus giving 13 pairs of shoes to the whole crew of one of the flagships; the rest, of course, were barefoot! "The same complaint," wrote Napier, when reporting to the Board that Admiral Chads had complained to him, "*is made by every ship in the fleet;* when it gets cold, it will be more serious. *Even now the men are on shore shoeless.*"

On the evening of the 12th, the whole of the batteries were ready for the attack, notwithstanding the almost continuous fire which the enemy had maintained during their construction. But the operations had been carried on in a manner at once so scientific and safe that scarcely any casualties had occurred.

At 4 a.m. on the 13th, the French battery of four 16-pounders and four mortars opened a well-directed fire on the western tower, or Fort Tzee. The French having made a regular zigzag approach to the fort, the Chasseurs were thrown forward almost to the walls, and kept up a galling fire from behind every tree and ledge of rock which flanked the embrasures. The light artillery had comparatively little effect upon the walls of the fort; but the shells from the mortars, plunging with terrific force upon the iron roof, soon reduced it to a complete wreck. The garrison, however, stood manfully to their guns and maintained a steady fire until towards evening, when a flag of truce was displayed from one of the windows of the roof. A parley followed, which led to nothing, and the firing was recommenced on both sides, and continued until darkness set in.

At daybreak on the 14th, the French resumed the bombardment, but no answering shots came from the fort. A body of Chasseurs then advanced and took possession of the place without opposition. The front of the fort had been well battered, though no complete breach had been effected; but the interior was much damaged. The Russians had about fifty men killed, who had been put in casks filled with lime.

The French had intended to turn the guns of Fort Tzee against the great fortress, but so soon as the garrison of the latter learned that Fort Tzee had surrendered, they directed their guns upon it, and succeeded in setting it on fire. For some time the fire made little progress, but at length it reached a powder-magazine in the lower basement, when the whole place blew up with a terrific explosion. A number of Russian wounded, who had been left there in charge of their own surgeon, unhappily perished in the explosion.

At 8 a.m. on the 15th, General Jones's battery, which had been placed under the command of Captain Ramsay, of the *Hogue*, and manned by seamen and marines from that vessel, the *Edinburgh*, *Ajax* and *Blenheim*, opened fire on Fort Nottich, at a range of about 750 yards. The guns—thirty-two-pounders

—told on the walls with far greater effect than had the light artillery of the French against Fort Tzee; while, as the fort was circular in shape, the Russians could only bring four of their guns to bear upon the British battery. From these they maintained a hot fire; but so admirably had the battery been constructed, that only one serious casualty occurred. This was the death of Lieutenant the Hon. Cameron Wrottesley, of the Royal Engineers, who was mortally wounded in the hip by a splinter which had been knocked away from a gun-carriage by a round shot. The unfortunate young officer expired twenty minutes after he had been taken on board the hospital ship *Belleisle*.

After a bombardment of two or three hours, a gap was made in the walls of Fort Nottich, which a few more shot increased to a regular breach, obliterating two embrasures in the upper tier and exposing to view the casemates and inner court. Two of the four guns had now been silenced; a third was speedily knocked out, but the fourth, sheltered by the ruins of the wall, which was now falling in large masses, continued to fire, the Russian gunners fighting it most heroically, though so quickly did the *débris* accumulate around it, that they had not time to clear it away, and the gun was fired from within the heap, so as to blow away the accumulating mass. For some time yet the gun continued to give shot for shot, but about half-past five in the afternoon down came the side of the fort, burying it beneath the ruins. Further resistance was impossible, and the brave defenders surrendered.

The prisoners, who numbered 120, including three officers, were conducted, under an escort of marines, to the British camp, and subsequently embarked on board the ships-of-war, being treated rather as friends than as enemies, so much was the gallantry they had shown appreciated by their captors.

During the successful bombardment of Fort Nottich, General Baraguay d'Hilliers had been employed in establishing his breaching batteries against the great fortress. With the object of diverting the attention of the enemy from these operations, the *Bulldog* and other steamers, supported by the *Trident*, *Duperré*, *Edinburgh* and *Ajax*, shelled the fortress and severely damaged it; whilst Captain the Hon. F. T. Pelham, of the *Blenheim*, kept up a most effective fire from the 10-inch pivot

gun of his ship, which, with his seamen alone, he had landed and placed in the battery on Transwig point, from which the *Amphion* and *Phlégéthon* had driven the enemy on the 8th. His position was one of great danger, but so energetically had the bluejackets laboured to reverse and strengthen the captured battery, that the gunners were well covered and sustained no casualties.

On the 16th, Napier sent a despatch to the Admiralty narrating the events of the past three days and concluding as follows :—

"The General's breaching batteries will be ready to-morrow, and they shall be well supported by the ships-of-the-line of both nations and the steamers. The narrowness of the ground on which the General has established his breaching batteries very much circumscribes the space. The greatest caution will be necessary to prevent firing on his troops; and the little space in the anchorage before Bomarsund, and the intricacy of the navigation, will prevent ships approaching the main fortress as near as could be wished, but when the batteries are established, acting in the rear of the fort, and supported by the shell guns in front, it cannot hold out more than a few hours. I have put off to the last moment the departure of the mail, but I shall send an extra courier the moment the fort surrenders."

The French breaching batteries were not required, for shortly after the steamer bearing this despatch had left for England the main fort surrendered. The last act in the drama is thus described by Napier, in a second despatch to the Admiralty, written the same day :

"*Bulldog*, off Bomarsund, August 16, 1854.

"After sending away the mail, the fortress opened a heavy fire on Captain Pelham's battery, which had annoyed them much, and which he maintained all yesterday and to-day, and it is wonderful how he and his men escaped. He had with him Lieutenant Close and Mr. Wildman, acting mate, of whom he speaks highly. Seeing his position, I immediately ordered the steamships and steamers *Edinburgh*, *Ajax*, *Arrogant*, *Amphion*, *Valorous*, *Sphinx* and *Driver*, who were within range with their 10-inch guns, to give them a shot and shell every five minutes; and they were so well directed, as well as the French mortars on shore, which had been playing on them for some time, that the enemy held out a flag of truce. I sent Captain Hall, of the *Bulldog*, on shore, who was shortly afterwards joined by Admiral Parseval's aide-de-camp and two of General Baraguay d'Hillier's staff, and the troops in the fortress agreed to lay down their arms and march out."

After the surrender of the place, Napier landed, and was joined by the French Admiral and General Baraguay d'Hilliers. The garrison then marched out, were embarked in steamers, and were taken to Ledsund, for transmission to England as prisoners of war. The number sent to England was 2,255. Five died on board the *Belleisle*, and seventeen were exchanged on recovering from their wounds.

The Admiral, in concluding his despatch, begged " to congratulate their lordships on the fall of this important fortress with so small a loss ; " adding that " he was happy to say that the greatest cordiality had subsisted between the French General and Admiral and himself, as well as between the soldiers and sailors of the two nations."

CHAPTER XXVI

SECOND RECONNAISSANCE OF SWEABORG—REPORTS OF BRIGADIER-GENERAL JONES AND GENERAL NIEL

IT has been stated by some writers that the capture of Bomarsund was a military operation. If by this is meant that the Allied fleet had not its full share in it, nothing can be further from the truth. The British sailors brought up their own guns by almost superhuman exertions and demolished Fort Nottich; while the French soldiers reduced Fort Tzee. So far, then, the two services were entitled to equal credit. But in the reduction of the main fortress the navy had by far the largest share. Its surrender was brought about by the fire of the British and French ships, of Captain Pelham's 10-inch naval gun—the only breaching battery directed against it—and of the French mortars, though the mortars were secondary in importance to the ships' guns and the naval guns on shore.

It should also be borne in mind that, but for Napier's foresight in detaching Rear-Admiral Plumridge to the Aland Islands to prevent reinforcements from reaching Bomarsund, and the activity and vigilance displayed by that officer in executing the duty entrusted to him, the preparations would not have been made in time to prevent a protracted siege, as the Russians had assembled 10,000 men at Abo, for the purpose of reinforcing the garrison; and a protracted siege, with the bad weather in the Baltic at hand, might have been attended with disastrous results. The Allied fleet, and, in particular, the British part of it, is, then, clearly entitled to the chief credit for the fall of Bomarsund.

In reply to his despatch announcing the surrender of Bomarsund, Napier received the following letter from the Board of Admiralty:—

"August 23, 1854.

"Having laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your despatches of the 11th and 16th of August, reporting the combined military and naval operations which had been undertaken with the view of effecting the reduction of the fortress of Bomarsund, and which resulted in its fall on the 16th inst., I am commanded by their Lordships to express to you their satisfaction at receiving this intelligence.

"They cordially approve of the orders you issued and of the judicious arrangements you made on the occasion, and they desire you will convey to Rear-Admirals Plumridge and Chads and to the whole of the officers and men employed on this service their Lordships' entire approbation of their conduct.

"My Lords have further to express their gratification at your report of the complete cordiality existing between yourself and the French Admiral and the General Commanding-in-Chief the French Army, and of the same spirit pervading the entire forces of the two nations throughout these combined operations.

"My Lords have been pleased this day to appoint Lieutenant Agnew, your flag-lieutenant, to the rank of commander."

Sir James Graham wrote as follows, under date August 22 :—

"I congratulate you sincerely on the success of your operations against Bomarsund, and I highly commend your prudence and wisdom in effecting the capture of this stronghold of the enemy without the loss of a ship or of many lives.

"You have judged well in every respect, both in detaining the line-of-battle ships until Bomarsund had fallen, and then in sending them home laden with prisoners.

"We can decide nothing as to the disposal of Bomarsund until we have ascertained the wishes and intentions of the French Government. If the Swedes refuse to accept it, and if the French are unwilling to garrison it during the winter, it must be blown up and levelled with the ground."

And on the same day Admiral Berkeley wrote :—

"Your work and the work of your fellow-labourers has been admirably done. Some of the newspapers are not satisfied, because you have not had a sufficient number killed and wounded, whilst the whole Government are pleased beyond measure at your trifling loss, and may well praise your skill and *discretion* in having succeeded in striking the first blow at so small a sacrifice.

"John Bull, never content, expects more than is possible. I trust you will not be goaded on, or beaten out of your own determinations. I have every confidence that you will attempt all that is feasible, and that you will succeed in all you attempt."

Towards the end of the operations against Bomarsund, Napier received the following letter from Delane, the Editor of the *Times* :—

" Serjeants' Inn, July 26, 1854.

" My dear Sir Charles,—I received your note of the 15th yesterday, and I hope you will write to me again with good news from Bomarsund. We want some exploits, for the public, though very patient, look to you and your fleet for greater results than I fear it is possible to give them. If we can't have Sweaborg or Cronstadt, however, we will take Bomarsund as an instalment.

" Admiral Berkeley read some extracts from your letters about Cronstadt and Sweaborg yesterday, and spoke very handsomely of you; so, indeed, does everybody, though there is a good deal of grumbling from your fleet sent home. I hope that you will be able to use the French troops to harass the Russian army a good deal, and compel them to keep a large force on the sea-board by the constant apprehension of attack The more men you can occupy in this way, the fewer she will have to send against us elsewhere. . . .

" The army in the East has hitherto been even more inactive than you in the Baltic, but I believe it is now certain that a blow will be struck at Sebastopol by the combined fleets and armies. It will be an immense operation, about the largest of modern times, but I should have little fear for its success if it were not for the climate, which is said to be very bad in the autumn.

" I hear you have lovely weather, smooth water and hot sun, but it won't last long, and if you wait till October, you will not bring all your fleet home.

" Write me all the news you can safely tell, and believe me,

" Yours faithfully,

" John T. Delane."

To which the Admiral replied as follows :—

" *Bulldog*, off Bomarsund, August 15, 1854.

" My dear Sir,—I received yesterday yours of the 26th July. Why it has been so long coming, I don't know. I am sorry I have not been able to give the public a good butcher's bill, but had I either attacked Cronstadt or Sweaborg with my fleet, they would have had a bill with the loss of the fleet, or had we succeeded in withdrawing disabled, we should have fallen an easy prey to the Russian fleet, which would have been worse. One would suppose it was only necessary to look at the bird's-eye view of Cronstadt or Sweaborg to convince the veriest dolt that to attack either with a fleet alone was impossible. You say there is grumbling in the fleet sent home; that probably comes from some poltroon who wants to get a name, full well knowing that he can talk big without having an opportunity of his courage being put to the test. I have the most absurd plans sent to me from people who ought to know better. One from Captain Washington, who wants to employ two dredging-machines to clear the eastern passage of Sweaborg of 15,000 tons of stuff

which block up the passage, which he could do in two days—the men to be protected with two layers of bullock hides and junk, and he is to get up a smoke one, and if that won't do, he is to make use of fog when it comes. All this to be done in the face of the forts and ships of Sweaborg, where probably they have 20,000 men, besides the forts, heaped upon one another, and mounting from one to two thousand guns. It was sent to me by Sir James Graham. I answered by replying his plan was very good, if the Russians would let him alone—if not, it was waste paper. He sent another plan, which was to draw all the piles they had driven in to the north of Cronstadt joining on to the mainland. I have no patience with the nonsense that is sent to me every day."

About the same time, the Admiral received a letter from one who was infinitely better qualified to appreciate the difficulties with which he had to contend than this self-constituted guide of public opinion, namely, the celebrated Lord Dundonald, a commander whose deeds had carried daring almost to the verge of romance :—

" 5, Osnaburg Terrace, Regent's Park, London, July 24, 1854.

" My dear Sir Charles,—Those only who are acquainted with the difficulties you have to surmount, and the nature of the obstacles assigned you to encounter, can appreciate the perseverance and moral courage requisite to overcome the one and endure the other. My anxiety lest your zeal should induce you to yield your judgment to the notions of the uninitiated is now quite relieved, and the noble fleet you command is safe from the consequences of red-hot shot and incendiary missiles, propelled from granite fortresses situated out of point-blank range of combustible ships. Believe me, that I sympathize with you, but do not envy the exalted position in which you have been placed, knowing that my remaining energies are incapable of effecting objects which you have already accomplished.

" Nevertheless, one means there is whereby I could aid you, originating in a fortunate coincidence which led by reflection to the maturity of a plan, first communicated to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent in 1812, and by him referred to a commission consisting of Lord Keith, Lord Exmouth and General and Colonel Congreve (all well informed and able men), who gave it as their opinion that my plans were infallible under the circumstances set forth. Whereupon H.R.H. sent for me and commanded secrecy, being alarmed at one of my instances being the capture of Gibraltar.

" Now, my dear Sir Charles, the false move of our military force on Varna, instead of Sebastopol, seems to throw the result of the war on you. I have, therefore, as there seemed no time for consultation, taken on myself the responsibility of sending the enclosed letter to our First Lord.*

* This letter, which presumably related to the writer's famous secret chemical process for destroying fortresses, is not to be found among Sir Charles Napier's correspondence.

" You, Sir Charles, are the only senior officer to whom (if denied participation) I would, for the interests of our country, entrust the execution of my plan mentally retained during upwards of forty years *for the benefit of our Allies*, and only now brought forward to avert, in my opinion, a greater evil than its disclosure.

" Believe me, ever my dear Sir Charles, yours sincerely,

" DUNDONALD."

Bomarsund having been captured, the question arose what was to be done with so great a prize. On August 17, the day after the fall of the fortress, Napier wrote to the Hon. Arthur Magennis, the British Minister at Stockholm, to inform him of this event, and to beg him to ascertain the intentions of the King of Sweden with regard to the Aland Islands. To this Mr. Magennis replied that he considered it impossible for his Majesty to give a definite answer in the present state of the negotiations. The Admiral thereupon again wrote, saying that the King had no time to lose, as, if the islands were to be occupied, preparations must be made for the winter ; and, if not, the French troops must be withdrawn as soon as possible. He added that, in the latter contingency, all the commanding officers were of opinion that Bomarsund should be destroyed.

The decision of Sweden was that she was not in a position to occupy the Aland Islands. She was in no alliance with France and England, and had not broken with Russia. To take the islands would be an act of hostility towards Russia, and therefore she would not do it. At the same time, she " discounselled " their evacuation, being evidently wishful to wait upon events. Mr. Magennis wrote that, notwithstanding this refusal, he had not abandoned the hope that Sweden would eventually consent to co-operate with the Allies, who would only weaken their cause by destroying the forts. He accordingly begged Napier to procure as long a delay as possible.

Meanwhile, the Admiral had written home for instructions. He told Sir James Graham that the works which Russia had been preparing at Bomarsund were on a gigantic scale, and that he and his colleagues were unanimous in recommending their destruction. The French had wanted to blow up the fort, but to this he had refused to consent.

The First Lord replied on August 25 :—

"*I am more than satisfied with your proceedings. I am delighted with the prudence and sound judgment you have displayed. It would have been a miserable want of firmness had you yielded to clamour, and risked your ships and sacrificed many valuable lives in an attempt to destroy by naval means works which were certain to fall to an attack by land.* Your reasoning also in favour of the immediate and entire destruction of Bomarsund is irresistible, and I hope you will take care that the destruction is complete, and that not one stone is left upon another."

This was accordingly effected, after Rear-Admiral Chads had, by Napier's instructions, experimentalized with the guns of the *Edinburgh*, including the new Lancaster gun, upon the fortifications; but it was not until September 14 that the work of demolition was completed.

On August 29, Sir James Graham again wrote to Napier, instructing him "to let the work of destruction be such that not a vestige be left, either of forts or outworks." He further stated that the fleet must now be withdrawn from the Baltic :—

"When we know what arrangement is to be made with respect to the French army, we will concert measures with France *for the gradual withdrawal of the fleet from the Baltic*. You should begin by sending home, without much delay, the sailing three-deckers, the least weatherly of the sailing line-of-battle ships, and the slowest and worst of the block-ships. This will do for a beginning; and by degrees you must withdraw to the southward, leaving the Gulf of Bothnia open, and watching only the Gulf of Finland with a squadron of observation."

Here were positive instructions from Sir James Graham, before the demolition of Bomarsund was completed, that the Admiral must prepare to return home, the time depending on what the French Government intended to do with their troops in the Baltic. These instructions form a striking contrast to those which followed shortly afterwards, when political expediency dictated the issue of orders of a very different tenor.

On the same day, Admiral Berkeley wrote :—

"We wish you, if no other operations are to be undertaken, to reduce your ships-of-the-line, the French in proportion, to as many as you deem sufficient to meet the Russian fleet when joined together from Helsingfors and Cronstadt, sending home first the sailing three-deckers and the block-ships, keeping your steamships-of-the-line, in preference to others."

These instructions were as precise as Sir James Graham's. Clearly, the Admiralty considered it very improbable that any

further operations could be undertaken so late in the year. Admiral Parseval likewise received a communication from the French Minister of Marine, dated August 30, intimating that the operations in the Baltic were finished for that season.

Napier was, however, of opinion that something more might be attempted, and accordingly despatched Captain Scott, with the *Odin, Alban, Gorgon* and *Driver,* to reconnoitre Abo. This officer carried out the task entrusted to him in a very able manner, and the Admiral, after studying the report which he submitted to him, came to the conclusion that the place might be successfully attacked, and at once proposed this enterprise to his French colleagues. They, however, did not approve of it, Baraguay d'Hilliers being unwilling to risk his troops at that season of the year, besides which there was a good deal of cholera amongst them. The weather had, indeed, become very unsettled and heavy gales were frequent.

The French General and the Allied Admirals had decided, and had informed their respective Governments, that nothing could be undertaken against Sweaborg that year, in consequence of the want of gun and mortar-boats, as well as from the lateness of the season, which rendered it imperative that the French troops should return home as soon as possible, as, now that Sweden had declined to accept the Aland Islands, it was out of the question that the French troops should winter in the Baltic.

Both the British and French Governments fully concurred in these views, the latter ordering their troops back to Cherbourg; while Sir James Graham, as well as Admiral Berkeley, directed Napier to begin sending home his ships.

General Baraguay d'Hilliers, however, not having seen Sweaborg and being unwilling to leave without having inspected it, went thither in the *Lightning*, whose commander, Captain Sulivan, from his previous opportunities, as well as from his experience as a surveyor, knew most about the channels, accompanied by General Niel, the engineer officer who had accompanied him to the Baltic, and Admiral Parseval. Brigadier-General Jones also accompanied the expedition, and, together with the French officers, obtained a good general view of the fortifications.

The inspection fully satisfied the two French Generals that nothing could be attempted against Sweaborg with the means at their disposal, and particularly at this season of the year.

Admiral Parseval, together with Napier, had, as we know, come to the same conclusion long before. On the other hand, General Jones made a report to Napier of a different tendency, though it must have argued no small confidence in his own abilities to make a report from casual inspection on what the Admirals had already decided from actual survey. General Jones's recommendations, however, were based upon military operations, and concerned Baraguay d'Hilliers rather than the Allied Admirals.

They were to the effect that " a very erroneous opinion " had been formed of the strength of the fortifications of Sweaborg, which, in his judgment, might be attacked with a prospect of success " by a heavy bombardment from a combined operation by land and sea. *A force of* 5,000 *men should be thrown ashore on the Island of Bak Holmen,* on which heavy batteries of guns and *mortars* could be constructed ; and when ready to open their fire, the ships should take up their positions for commencing simultaneously with the land batteries ; the fronts of the whole of the line of works facing the sea should be attacked while this was going on ; the battery on Bak Holmen would take them in flank, and enfilade the entire of the principal works in Vargon and dockyard, warehouses, etc. *Large rockets* would be found very efficacious."

He was of opinion that " should everything prove favourable, the operation ought not to occupy more than seven or eight days," and that " the close of the summer season might probably be considered the best for bombarding Sweaborg, as the winter, following close upon the destruction of the public establishments and buildings, would preclude the possibility of repairing or rebuilding them during a northern winter."

Napier had already, it will be remembered, sent the Admiralty a plan for a combined military and naval attack on Sweaborg, when the Government should send out the means for putting it into execution ; and General Jones's plan contained nothing new, except the 5,000 troops to be landed on Bak Holmen, and his suggestion as to the best time of year for the operations to be undertaken. When drawing up this report, General Jones could hardly have been aware that some weeks before there were supposed to be 40,000 troops in Sweaborg and its vicinity, and

that there was reason to believe that since then their numbers had been considerably increased, or he would not have proposed to operate against such a force with 5,000 men only! Napier had estimated that 50,000 men would be required; Sir James Graham had talked of 50,000 Swedes and 200 Swedish gunboats!

General Jones also required *mortars* and *large rockets;* but, unfortunately, there was not a single rocket or a single mortar in the British fleet, and though Baraguay d'Hilliers had four mortars, he was too prudent a general to allow them to be used at that season of the year for the purpose suggested.

On receiving General Jones's report, Napier at once transmitted it to his French colleagues and to the Admiralty, and at the same time wrote to Sir James Graham :—

"August 29.

"I have sent General Jones's report of Sweaborg to the Admiralty; it differs little from what I wrote to you some time ago. I don't, however, agree with him that landing 5,000 troops in Bak Holmen would be safe. If you land 5,000, they will oppose you with 10,000, and, as both sides of the passage are fortified, they could cross over any number they pleased. If you land at all, you must land a force superior to any they can bring against you; and I do not think the Emperor of Russia would leave such an important fortress with a weak garrison. Your force there, if small, would be sacrificed. If you attack from the sea and from the islands *with an overwhelming force of gun and mortar-boats,** backed by the fleet and steamers, I believe you would destroy it, but it would be a work of time. I do not think our present force would do it, and the season is much too far advanced to attempt it; all the channels must be buoyed before the ships and steamers could be placed, and if it came to blows, they would be endangered. It would not be an affair of a few hours, it would be days; a retreat would be difficult, and a retreat would be failure."

The French General and Admiral refused to entertain General Jones's plan, and very rightly so, for a more quixotic plan than that of attacking a large army, sheltered by one of the strongest fortresses in existence, with no more than 5,000 troops, aided by ships which could not get up to the fortress, from danger of sunken rocks, has seldom been proposed. "The best proof, perhaps, of this," observes Earp, "is that, in the following year, when supplied with gun and mortar-boats, rockets, etc., Admiral

* The italics are our own.

Dundas did not make any attempt on the batteries with his ships, and was only able, with his mortar-boats and gunboats, to burn at long range all that was combustible."*

As so much was afterwards made of this plan of General Jones, when it suited the purpose of the Admiralty, it is necessary to examine the matter at some length, though the limits of this work will not admit of the insertion of the whole correspondence.

Baraguay d'Hilliers, in a letter to Napier dated July 2, pronounced that General Jones's plan of attacking Sweaborg, as regarded the combined operation of the fleet or army at this dangerous season of the year, appeared to Admiral Parseval and himself "*equally impossible.*"

"You have done me the honour, Monsieur l'Amiral," he writes, "to communicate to me a report of General Jones on the fortress of Sweaborg. General-of-Division Niel, who has examined this same report, has written me the accompanying letter, which I have the honour of transmitting to you. We share the opinion of General Jones that Sweaborg can be attacked and taken with the fleets, if it were desirable to make a serious attack. No doubt the co-operation of the land forces landed at Bak Holmen would contribute to the success. But this operation, which would necessitate *a disembarkation at this period of the year, which is dangerous for the army, appears to Admiral Parseval and myself equally impossible.*"†

General Niel, as a brother engineer officer, did not, in the letter which Baraguay d'Hilliers enclosed, dispute General Jones's plan—he only demolished it thoroughly and completely, both as to means and to season!

"The island of Bak Holmen cannot be carried without great loss. The Russians have there constructed three batteries; that of twelve guns, situated on the edge of the channel, is a raking battery. The approaches, moreover, are flanked, on one side, by the fortifications of Gustavsvard; on the other, by a redoubt established on another island to the right (Kung's Holmen). The force which the Russians maintain in Helsingfors is computed at 15,000 men. These forces would continually be increasing, if the fort were attacked. Besides these, there

* "Sir Charles Napier's Campaign in the Baltic," p. 415.

† From the expression in the above letter, "We share the opinion of General Jones that Sweaborg can be attacked and taken with the fleets," it would appear, as Earp points out, that Baraguay d'Hilliers had mistaken the purport of General Jones's report, which was not to make the attack by the combined fleets alone, but with the aid of 5,000 French troops. The writer afterwards notices this, but his first expression is ambiguous.

are 10,000 men of the line. The certainty of being able to withdraw their troops from Bak Holmen by the roadstead, without receiving a shot, shows that the Russians would not fail to throw a large number of men into this island to defend it. If we admit that it will be taken from the Russians, we cannot dispute that this occupation will cost us dear. Then, again, it will be necessary to occupy beforehand a position for the 5,000 men who will be at Bak Holmen, under fire of the batteries of Sweaborg, as well as under that of the fleet firing from the interior of the harbour; and who will not cease to be disturbed by the guns and musketry of the Russians, who will be able to approach well within musket-shot by the islands on the right, which islands will not be occupied.

"I certainly do not dispute the advantages of an attack on Bak Holmen, but with other means than those we at present possess, viz.: By occupying the wooded island to the right; *by having a good number of heavy mortars, whilst we have but four small ones; and, above all, by operating at a season when the communication between the army and the fleet would be well assured, which does not happen in the month of September, as we every day experience.*"

General Niel then goes on to express the opinion that "if the fleets were to anchor within easy range of Sweaborg, they would be opposed to the weakest fronts,* and in *less than two hours* the fortifications would be untenable." He, however, adds:—

"*But ships are very complicated machines; very easy to set on fire. Such an operation is bold. It has never been done that I know of, and it does not come within my province to advise it.* I only remark that, if it should be tried, it renders useless the attack by way of Bak Holmen; which, even in case of success, would be attended by much greater loss of men than in an attack by sea.

"If the attack by the fleet should be made at a great distance, its effect will be absolutely nothing, and an attack by land will be insufficient. It will be necessary to re-embark in front of the enemy, an operation even otherwise difficult and dangerous, and the landing itself will be very much so.

"I conclude, then, that, under the circumstances, *the land attack by way of Bak Holmen, the difficulties of which no one can dispute, is useless in the one case, insufficient and dangerous in the other. I could not therefore advise it.*"

Thus, General Niel completely demolishes General Jones's plan, and admits that he cannot take the responsibility of

* The writer makes a serious mistake, arising from his necessarily incomplete examination of Sweaborg, in believing the sea-fronts of the fortress to be the weakest. They were, in point of fact, incontestably the strongest, their strength consisting in a range of guns *en barbette*, with casemates cut in the solid rock, against which no bombardment could avail.

advising the carrying out of his own suggestion, which was promptly rejected by the Allied Admirals, who were probably far more competent judges of what ships could do against stone walls than any officer of engineers, however distinguished. It would appear that Admiral R. S. Dundas, even with the additional means he had at his command the following year, must have held the same opinion, otherwise, he would no doubt have made an attempt with his fleet in the manner proposed by General Niel.

Had the Allied Admirals, in fact, followed the suggestion of General Niel, they would have been acting in opposition to the reiterated instructions of the Admiralty and of Sir James Graham, and would, moreover, have been attempting what they knew to be a most rash and hazardous undertaking. Had they, on the other hand, allowed themselves to be guided by the advice of General Jones, they would have acted contrary to the opinions and counsels of both the French Generals. But, even if the Admirals had approved of General Jones's scheme, Baraguay d'Hilliers would most certainly have refused to allow his troops to be used for such an operation, for on September 3 he received orders from the French Minister of War, dated August 29, to evacuate Bomarsund and return with his troops to Cherbourg; and on the following day he sailed for France.

CHAPTER XXVII

COUNCILS OF WAR—WITHDRAWAL OF THE FRENCH FLEET—CHANGED POLICY OF THE ADMIRALTY

ON September 5—the day following the departure of the French troops—Napier received a letter from Admiral Parseval, in which he stated that he had just received a despatch from the French Minister of Marine, advising him that the period had arrived when the combined squadrons should return home, and that he wished to consult the British Admiral on the matter.

We have already seen that the Board of Admiralty, as well as Sir James Graham and Admiral Berkeley, had directed Napier to begin sending his ships home, and this was no doubt done in concert with the French Government, as the Minister of Marine, in his orders to Admiral Parseval, makes use of the expression, " l'époque à laquelle *les escadres combinées* rentreront dans leurs ports." It is hence clear that both the British and French Governments had fully determined to withdraw their respective squadrons, and therefore equally clear that nothing further was expected of them at the now advanced season of the year, which would soon become dangerous to the ships.

Heavy weather had, in fact, already set in, and on the 7th the French ship-of-the-line *Tilsit* and two frigates were despatched by Admiral Parseval to Cherbourg. On the same day, from the increasing gales, the *Majestic* parted her chain-cable, and fears were entertained for the provisions transport *Nimrod*, which had got on shore on coming into Ledsund. After long continued exertions the latter vessel was floated off, though not before a considerable part of her cargo had been spoiled, to the serious inconvenience of the squadron, which was in need of many articles rendered useless by the accident.

On September 12, Napier received a letter from Admiral Berkeley, dated the 5th, informing him that great dissatisfaction

existed in England owing to the non-realization of the extravagant hopes which the public had formed of what was to be accomplished in the Baltic and the East :—

" John Bull is getting uproarious, because nobody is killed and wounded ; meetings are being called to condemn the Government, because Cronstadt and Sebastopol have not been captured, and the return of the French troops, or rather the reported return, excited derision. . . .

" I know not what to do about recalling some of your fleet. We must first know decidedly whether or not any further operations are to be undertaken. I perceive that General Jones thinks that Sweaborg might be destroyed. I sincerely hope there will be unanimity in your councils."

By the same mail came a despatch from the Board of Admiralty, dated the 4th, informing Napier that, as the season during which so large a combined fleet could remain in the Baltic was drawing to a close, " he was to consult with his French colleagues and the Admirals on whom he had reliance as to what operations remained to be undertaken this year." He was told to bear in mind that " any object to be gained must be worth the attempt, and that useless expenditure of life, with destruction of ships, should not be hazarded for any object unworthy of the risk and the cause in which he was engaged." The Board trusted the deliberations of the Admirals would be unanimous, and added that it had the fullest confidence in the Admirals coming to a decision which would reflect credit on the arms of the Allied forces, and justify before the public the confidence placed in them.

On receipt of these instructions, Napier at once informed Admiral Parseval of their purport. The French General had sailed for France, so he, of course, could not be consulted. But Napier sent for Rear-Admirals Chads and Michael Seymour (Plumridge had relieved Rear-Admiral Martin in the command of his squadron after the fall of Bomarsund and was at Nargen, while Martin was with the steamer squadron in the Gulf of Bothnia), and they, together with Admirals Parseval and Penaud, held a consultation as directed on board the *Duke of Wellington*.

The result of this consultation was that the five Admirals unanimously decided that " in consequence of the advanced season of the year, nothing could be undertaken against Sweaborg, or any other fortified port on the coast of Russia, with a chance of success, and we are also of opinion (with the resources at

present at our disposition) without the loss of a great many men and seriously compromising the ships."

In transmitting this report to the Board, the Admiral accompanied it with a very straightforward letter, which apparently gave great offence :—

"I dare say there is a great deal of dissatisfaction in England that more was not done by so large an army; but the fact is, they came too late in the season to carry on any ulterior operations, whilst their departure has been hurried. I wished them to go to Abo, which was a purely military question, but no one seemed to like it, and, as a heavy gale of wind came on the night they left Ledsund, there is no knowing what might have happened had we gone there. The French Rear-Admiral's ship drove into our hawse, our dolphin-striker thumping against her stern, and our cable out to the clinch. Had she fallen on board us, and we had both gone ashore, and taken another line-of-battle ship with us, the people of England would perhaps have come to their senses, and seen that operations in these seas are not easy at this season of the year.

"Their lordships will observe that General Jones proposed landing 5,000 men at Sweaborg and planting batteries against it, and he thought this a good season to do so. Had the French General been unwise enough to have followed this advice, or had the Admirals been indiscreet enough to have countenanced an operation that, by his own account, required seven or eight days to have brought it to a successful termination, the troops would have been made prisoners, and probably half a dozen of the ships lost. This would have made a rather bad finish to the first campaign in the Baltic.

"If their lordships will read with attention Admiral Chads's report, my own, and General Jones's (with the exception of what I had stated), they would find us all pretty well agreed as to the proper mode of attacking Sweaborg and Cronstadt; and that *either ought to be attacked in a proper manner*, or not at all. I have received many propositions for attacking both Sweaborg and Cronstadt, but I never will lend myself to any absurd project, or be driven to attempt what is not practicable by newspaper writers, who, I am sorry to say, I have reason to believe, are in correspondence with officers of the fleet, who ought to know better."

The Admiralty did not wait for the report of the council of war, for on the 16th out came another despatch, dated the 9th, ordering Napier immediately to lay General Jones's report before the French General-in-Chief and Admirals in another council of war, to decide whether the opinion of General Jones had so far altered that which they had already formed as to induce them to undertake the operation.

As the French General had sailed for France nearly a fortnight before these orders arrived, and as the troops which formed

the basis of General Jones's proposed attack had been withdrawn, no council could, of course, be held on the subject. It seems singular, indeed, that such instructions should have been sent at all, as on September 5—four days before the despatch was written—the French Minister of Marine had applied to the Admiralty for steamers to tow the French transports home, so that the Admiralty could hardly have supposed that the troops would still be available when their orders reached Napier.

The Admiralty was evidently enamoured of councils of war, for on the following day—the 17th—another despatch reached Napier. In this document, which was dated the 12th, by which time the Board was aware that the French troops had been withdrawn, he was directed to hold a third council, to take into consideration the report of General Niel as to the feasibility of attacking Sweaborg by naval means alone :—

"The French Army has been withdrawn from the Baltic, but the French Fleet is still present with you, and you must lose no time in conferring with Admiral Parseval and in ascertaining whether he is willing to join in a naval attack on Sweaborg, such as General Niel regards as certain to lead to success.

"If at this conference it shall appear both to you and to him an attempt too rash to be undertaken, you are hereby directed to cause this joint opinion to be recorded in writing; if one of you be favourable to the undertaking and the other unfavourable, a council of the Admirals present should be called, and their advice and opinion taken.

"It must be remembered that the destruction of Sweaborg has always been regarded as an object of great importance from the first commencement of the war."*

* Sir James Graham had repeatedly told Napier that the blockade was the primary object, and as repeatedly cautioned him not to run his ships against stone walls. He had now apparently changed his opinion, under pressure of the public dissatisfaction, for with the Admiralty despatch came a letter from him, in which he wrote :—

"I hope when this letter reaches you the French Admiral, with his line-of-battle ships, will still be within your power of communication with him, for General Niel's letter, which you transmitted to us in your despatch of the 6th, renders it necessary that you should distinctly and officially raise the question whether he concurs in the opinion expressed by the French military authorities, that Sweaborg *may be attacked with success by naval means alone*. General Niel speaks of eight or ten sail-of-the-line as sufficient for the purpose. *If the French be disposed to risk one half of this number*, I do not suppose that volunteers to an equal amount would be wanting in the British fleet. On the other hand, if the French Admiral repudiates the suggestions of the French General, he ought, in writing, to concur that the operation is too hazardous. If, unhappily, nothing more can be done, it is wisest *to send home at once the smallest and least effective of the steamers, and the least weatherly of the large ships*. Should you decide on any further active operations you are, of course, at full liberty to postpone any diminution of your force."

Admiral Parseval, when informed of the orders which Napier had received, replied that, having already given his opinion on the subject, and seeing no reason whatever for its modification, he must be excused from attending a further consultation.*

Napier thereupon called a council of his own Admirals, and they, after reading General Niel's report, unanimously agreed that they saw no reason to change the opinion they had expressed at the previous council of war on the 12th, and Rear-Admiral Martin, who was not present on the former occasion, concurred in his colleagues' views. They then drew up and signed the following report, which was duly transmitted to the Admiralty :—

"We, the undersigned, have examined the report of General Niel that Sweaborg can be successfully attacked by ships alone.

"We have already given our unanimous opinion that neither the season nor our resources permit such an attack without the loss of a great many men, and seriously compromising the ships, and Rear-Admiral Martin, having maturely considered our report, adopts the same opinion.

"After having read General Niel's report, we see no reason to change the opinion we have already expressed.

"The French Admiral, having already given his opinion, and signed it, declined the conference.

"Given under our hands on board the *Duke of Wellington*, at Ledsund, this 18th day of September, 1854.

(Signed) "CHARLES NAPIER. H. D. CHADS.
"MICHAEL SEYMOUR. H. B. MARTIN."

In transmitting the report of the second council of war to the Board of Admiralty, Napier wrote as he felt regarding the way in which he, together with the French Admiral, had been urged on to an undertaking which he rightly regarded as hazardous to the last degree, after both the First Lord and the First Sea Lord had cautioned him against allowing himself to be goaded into acting against his better judgment.

* "MONSIEUR L'AMIRAL,—I have just read the Admiralty despatch, dated 12th September, a copy of which your Excellency has done me the honour to address to me.

"This despatch having been sent to you before the Noble Lords had been acquainted with the *unanimous* opinion of the Admirals at the conference of the 12th September, and not having been able in the least to modify my opinion on the subject of the attack on Sweaborg, I beg you to permit me to refer to that opinion, and to excuse me from assisting at a fresh consultation, only *to make the same declaration.*"

"I hope," he writes, "I may be permitted to ask their Lordships what reliance could be placed on the opinion of two military engineers on naval subjects, when one decided that Sweaborg could be destroyed by 5,000 men, guns, mortars and rockets from the island of Bak Holmen, *combined with an attack by the Allied fleet, in seven or eight days*; whilst the other decides that it can be laid in ruins *in two hours by the fleet alone?*

"General Jones required 5,000 men to be landed, batteries of guns and mortars placed, and, with all these means, if everything turned out favourably, it would require seven or eight days to reduce it. *I only required gunboats, mortars and the fleet to do it.* I differed, as their Lordships will see, about the troops, and remarked that if troops were landed, it must be a superior army. General Jones also thought the season favourable. *I thought no such thing.* General Niel thought the ships alone sufficient. *The Admirals thought differently.* I made no remarks on General Niel's suggestion, as I thought that General Niel was not a proper judge of what ships could do, and also that my opinion, as well as the opinion of Admiral Chads, had already been given to Sir James Graham, and that he had submitted it to their Lordships."

And he enclosed a report on Sweaborg which he had sent to Sir James Graham on July 18, but which, it subsequently appeared, had never been laid before the Admiralty by the First Lord, for reasons which only he could have explained.* This report was as follows:—

"The only successful manner of attacking Sweaborg that I can see, after the most mature consideration, assisted by Admiral Chads, who is a practical man, and knows more about gunnery than any man in the service, is *by fitting out a great number of gunboats*, carrying one gun with a long range, and placing them west of Sweaborg and south of Helsingfors. Every shell from them would tell somewhere, and perhaps not *five per cent.* from the enemy would take effect. Back these by the fleet, to relieve the men, and in the course of the summer Sweaborg would be reduced to ashes and Helsingfors also, if it was thought proper; and I don't see why we are to be mealy-mouthed in time of war. The ships, you will see, could not be destroyed, because they could move out of the way.

"I was at the siege of Martinique many years ago. We could not batter Port Bourbon, as it lay higher than the ground around it. But fifty guns plunging their shells into it made it surrender; and whether

* Whatever Sir James Graham's reason may have been, the fact of his failing to lay this report before the Board must be regarded as a pretty conclusive proof that he did not at that time contemplate the feasibility of an attack on Sweaborg, as, indeed, his letters up to the end of August clearly indicate. It was only when the short Baltic summer had passed away, with neither gunboats, mortar-boats, nor rockets supplied to the fleet, and when the public had become clamorous, that he began to urge upon Napier enterprises of an impossible character, aware, no doubt, that the Admiral would refuse to undertake them.

mortars are placed on shore or in gunboats is quite immaterial. Indeed, the latter have the advantage, for when the shells begin to tell and our blood begins to warm, the ships would move up to the batteries, and close quarters would finish what the mortar-boats began.

"I sent you home, I think, copies of all the plans I have, and if you will lay them before the engineer and artillery officers, I will be bound for it they will agree with me that this is the only way to destroy Sweaborg, without an army superior to the Emperor of Russia, which we are not likely to bring into the field. *It is too late this year; but be prepared next, now we know the anchorage, and begin early.*

"I forgot to say that the islands within range may all be put in requisition for *13-inch mortars*. The expense would be very great, no doubt; but if we are to bring the war to a conclusion, *expense must not be thought of.*"

Here, on July 18, Napier asks for gunboats and 13-inch mortars, none of which were supplied, and tells the First Lord: "*It is too late this year; but be prepared next,* and *begin early.*" We must ask the reader to bear this in mind.

With his despatch to the Admiralty, went letters to Sir James Graham and Admiral Berkeley, written in much the same strain. In the former, Napier reiterated his opinion that "*Sweaborg ought to be attacked properly, or not at all,* and laid in ruins;" adding that "if his advice were followed, it might be done *next summer,* and the fleet captured also."

"It is very well for people to talk big, and say what they will do," he continues; "but put a fleet of twenty sail-of-the-line into their hands, and let the fleet be conducted amongst unknown rocks and shoals—*not yet surveyed*—and at this season of the year, *when you cannot depend on the weather for two hours*—when it would require two days to buoy it off; and then suppose a gale of wind to come on, and suddenly, when you are at anchor, as we have already seen, what would become of your ships? Add to that a fleet superior to your own, and ready to pounce upon you should you be disabled."

And in his letter to Admiral Berkeley he says:—

"I did not require a council of war to make me do my duty, nor, after all the praises that have been heaped on me, *and after the warnings which I had received, to be goaded on to rashness.*

"I suppose I shall be right in sending home our fleet *gradually,* although you say we must *withdraw them all,* except a squadron to blockade the Gulf."

The letter to Sir James Graham and the despatch to the Admiralty, the latter in particular, apparently sealed Napier's

fate. For their lordships to be told in such very plain terms that all that he had asked for in order to destroy Sweaborg was gunboats and mortar-boats was too true to be palatable. "Henceforward it became evident," observes Earp, "that the only relation in which the Board of Admiralty and Sir Charles Napier could stand towards each other was who should bear the blame with the public; and for this contest the Admiralty girded up its loins right manfully." The Senior Naval Lord, whom Napier had always considered a sincere friend, frankly apprised him of the coming storm in a letter of September 24:—

"We shall have blue-books and parliamentary papers without end. THE ATTACK FAILING AGAINST YOU, WILL BE LEVELLED AT THE BOARD, OR, FAILING AGAINST THE BOARD, WILL BE LEVELLED AGAINST YOU."

Henceforward, no means were left untried by the incapable and selfish Graham—whose short-sighted parsimony, and miserable ambition "to make war cheaply," were mainly responsible for the want of any startling success in the Baltic—and his colleagues at Whitehall, to divert the disappointed feelings of the nation from their legitimate object to the gallant old Admiral, who had done all that mortal man could do, with the inadequate resources at his command.

On the 17th, Admiral Parseval had sent home Admiral Penaud with five of his ships, and on the 19th he sailed for France with the rest of his squadron, with the exception of four steamers, which he left Napier to assist him in maintaining the blockade. Notwithstanding his orders of August 30 to return to Cherbourg, he had, as will subsequently appear, intended to remain, with the greater part of his fleet and all his steamers, so long as the British squadron remained in the Baltic. There can be no doubt that his departure was precipitated by the importunities of the British Admiralty, and it is impossible to blame him for refusing to allow himself to be made its catspaw.

At the eleventh hour, on the eve of the departure of the French fleet, *one gunboat*—the *Wrangler*—was sent out as a reinforcement to the British squadron. As she had taken a whole summer to build, it might have been supposed that she would have been worthy of all the time and care which had been spent upon her construction. So far, however, from this being the

case, she would appear to have been a wretchedly inefficient vessel.

On the departure of the French fleet, Napier sailed with his force for Nargen to join the squadron already there under Admiral Plumridge, thus re-entering the Gulf of Finland, of which more than a month before (August 15) the Senior Naval Lord had written :—

" I am seriously thinking when it will be time to get you out of *that infernal Gulf*. How long do you think it will be right to permit those big ships to remain ? Autumn is getting on fast."

The fleet at Nargen now consisted of sixteen ships-of-the-line, three frigates and six steamers ; but with this force Napier considered himself fully able to deal with the Russian fleet, in the very unlikely event of its venturing out to try conclusions with him. The weather was becoming worse, the anchorage was bad, being exposed to the winds from north to north-east, and it was obvious that the sooner instructions arrived for the withdrawal of the fleet from the " infernal Gulf," the greater would be Napier's chance of bringing it home intact.

On the 22nd, the Admiral reconnoitred Revel, and came to the conclusion that an attack upon it from the sea would be a very hazardous undertaking. On the following day he again reconnoitred Sweaborg, proceeding thither in the *Driver*, piloted by Captain Sulivan, through an intricate passage of sunken rocks, little more than a quarter of a mile wide, and stopping abreast of Grohara Island, about two miles south of Gustavsvard. This reconnaissance was carried out with the view of facilitating any operations that might be undertaken the *following* year, and certainly did not imply the possibility of anything being done at so advanced a period of 1854 ; and the result of a close examination of the works only served to confirm his previous conviction that without gunboats and mortar-boats the place was unassailable.

On September 25, Napier sent a report to the Admiralty, giving *two* distinct plans for attacking Sweaborg : the first by ships alone, which he considered very uncertain of success ; the other, the success of which he thought certain. But, in regard to both of these plans, he expressed the opinion that they were not practicable at that season of the year, when the weather

could not be depended on for two hours together, and when he did not know how many ships might be lost :—

" In my former report," he writes, " I agreed with Captain Washington that the fleet could lie in Miolo Roads *in the summer*. That is now more difficult, as batteries have been built on the south points of Sandhamm Island ; but they could be destroyed. If Sweaborg was attacked by *a fleet alone*, they would approach from the south in one line, raked by 160 guns. One or two of the leading ships would anchor, and occupy the batteries at Bak Holmen. The next would pass on, fire a broadside into the three-decker and anchor clear of her broadside, against the south-west angle of Gustav's Sward ; she would be followed by the next, pouring a broadside into the three-decker, and anchor ahead of her leader, and so on, in succession, as close as the ships could lie. By this time the three-decker would probably be sunk, and the whole western face of Sweaborg engaged.

" A small squadron would be required to anchor south of Langhorn. They would have to contend against it, and two or more line-of-battle ships, and what guns were in Helsingfors.

" All the passages should be buoyed and small steamers stationed in the narrowest and most dangerous channels. The large steamers should be under weigh in various directions to assist ships in difficulties, and a reserve squadron ready to take the place of disabled ships.

" *Whether this attack would succeed or not, it is impossible to say ;* but we must calculate on ships being set on fire by red-hot shot and shells, of which the Russians would have abundance. Whether successful or not, it is evident that *our ships would be in no condition to meet the Russian fleet afterwards ; and if the attack was made at this season of the year, when you cannot depend upon the weather for two hours, I do not know how many would be lost.*

" I beg their lordships will not suppose for a moment that Sweaborg cannot be attacked. I think it can ; *but it must be with caution and judgment.*

" I have little to add to the report I made to Sir James Graham,* a copy of which I sent to the Admiralty. Since that report it has become easier. We have now Lancaster guns ; every ship in the fleet should be furnished with them. *Thirteen-inch mortars should be placed on Laghara Island and Lango Rocks, and gunboats carrying Lancaster guns should be added to the fleet.* These ships should be placed at different points, at a proper distance from the fortifications, *well furnished with shot, shells and rockets ;* and a bombardment commenced and continued till the wooden buildings, of which there are many, were on fire, and an evident impression made on the fortress. The ships should then close in and finish the work. How long this would take I cannot say, but I am quite certain the fortress would be laid in ruins, and most probably an entrance opened to the ships. I have said nothing about troops, but there is no doubt they could be most usefully employed."

* The report of July 18, which Sir James Graham had failed to lay before the Board.

It is very clear, from several expressions in this report, that Napier merely intended it as an appendage to the report of July 18, in which he had asked for gunboats and 13-inch mortars, none of which had been supplied—unless the unfortunate *Wrangler* is entitled to be described as a gunboat—and had told the First Lord that "*it was too late this year*" to attack Sweaborg, and advised him to "be prepared and *begin early next.*" Even, however, if this were not so, it is difficult to see how any person of ordinary intelligence could have construed as referring to the present year a report following so closely on the decision of the writer and the other Admirals arrived at at the councils of war held on September 12th and 18th, when it will be remembered the French fleet was still at Ledsund, that "in consequence of the advanced season of the year, nothing could be undertaken against Sweaborg, or any other fortified port on the coast of Russia, with a chance of success;" which stated that at "this season of the year the weather could not be depended upon for two hours," and which declared that, if Sweaborg were attacked, "it must be *with caution and judgment;*" that is to say, with the means which Napier considered necessary to ensure success: 13-inch mortars, Lancaster guns to every ship, gunboats and ships "well furnished with shot, shells and rockets." He had only one gunboat and one Lancaster gun, and the Admiralty had told him that it was impossible to supply him with more, not a mortar of any description, or a single rocket, and only eighty rounds of shot per gun. To pretend, then, that he was prepared to attack Sweaborg at this season, as we shall presently see Sir James Graham and his satellites at the Admiralty had the effrontery to do, was a wilful perversion of his report to a meaning which it was never intended to bear, nor could be made to bear, except by men who, in retaliation for his outspoken letters, were determined, if possible, to ruin his reputation, in order to cover their own incapacity.

So far was Napier from contemplating the possibility of any attack on Sweaborg that year, that on the very same day (September 25) on which his report to the Board was written, he instructed Admiral Plumridge to proceed to Kiel with the *Neptune*, *St. George*, *Monarch* and *Regent*, with the *Hecla* and *Driver* steamers and the French steamers *La Place* and *Phlégéthon*,

there to await orders from the Admiralty; while on the 26th we find him writing to Lord Palmerston :—

"The weather has been so bad the last month, that, even had the French fleet and army been here, no operation was practicable. . . . You will probably see my report on Sweaborg. I am going to move to the south, as the Gulf is no longer safe."

The same day, he informed Lord Loftus, our Ambassador at Berlin, that "*there was no chance of any further operations;*" wrote to General Jones, who had asked for a steamer to be placed at his disposal to enable him to make a reconnaissance of Cronstadt, that "in consequence of the departure of the French fleet and army and the state of the weather, it was not his intention to undertake any further operations against the enemy," and sent the following letter to the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State for War :—

"Your Grace will see my opinion about Sweaborg; we had a good look at it and were very nearly ashore. I have ordered the sailing ships to Kiel, as I do not think them safe here, and I shall proceed there shortly myself, leaving a strong squadron of steamers at the entrance of the Gulf, the blockade of Sweaborg being impossible any longer. The officers who have been there have not had their clothes off for weeks, and deserve the greatest credit."

On the same day, also, he wrote to Delane, the Editor of the *Times*, in answer to an article which had appeared in that journal on the 13th inst., expressing an earnest hope that the rumour that operations in the Baltic were at an end for the year and the fleet about to return to England was untrue, as such a decision would be "unnecessary, ill-timed and calculated to damage the cause of the Allies and serve that of Russia." The writer, who appeared to imagine that several weeks still remained during which active operations might be carried on in the Baltic, expressed the opinion that, judging from what had happened at Bomarsund, the fleet's guns would experience no difficulty in demolishing the defences of other Russian fortresses, and concluded by asserting that "Sweaborg and Cronstadt, and not Spithead, should now be the destination of Sir Charles Napier" :—

"I have read a leading article in the *Times*, headed, 'Return from the Baltic. Disappointment of the Public.'

"I can assure you, were you in my position now, riding out a gale of wind blowing right into Revel, which gale has been blowing sometimes from the south-west and sometimes from the north-east for this last month, you would think it high time for the Fleet to move out of the Gulf of Finland further south. You say the war is just beginning in the Black Sea and just terminating in the Baltic, but you forget there is ten degrees difference of latitude, and that the month of September here must be compared with the month of November in England. You forget, also, that both the French Fleet and Army have returned to France. I must tell you that since the taking of Bomarsund and destruction of the works, there has hardly been a day that it was possible, had your means been ever so great, to have operated upon this dangerous coast.

"I have had a squadron of frigates looking out off Sweaborg since April, and no words of mine can express my admiration of Captain Watson and his squadron for the blockade they have kept up in the worst of weather during this month, and, in doing so, there is not a ship that has not lost an anchor and some two; he has only had seven miles of clear sea to work in, the rest being rocks. One of his ships has been on shore, and a wonder to me is that half of them have not been lost, and yet you say, instead of their coming to Spithead, Sweaborg and Cronstadt should be the destination of the squadron. I went up in a steamer to Sweaborg the only fine day we have had, through a passage inshore with sunken rocks, a quarter of a mile wide, and examined it well, and be assured it is not so easily taken as people think, and, if attacked at this season of the year, the probability is, instead of bringing away the Russian squadron, you would leave your own on the rocks; and Cronstadt is still more dangerous and still stronger. . . .

"I am quite sure, if you knew our difficulties, you would give us praise instead of censure. Abo is the only place that could have been attacked since the capture of Bomarsund, and that the French General would not do, as he was too anxious to get back to France."

It is not a little singular to find Napier, who had on more than one occasion in the past expressed his indifference to the comments of the Press, taking the trouble to reply to this article and justify his conduct to Delane. But it should be remembered that Delane exercised, through the *Times*, a greater influence on public opinion than any man in England. He could ruin a professional reputation as easily as a political one, and the Admiral had no wish to allow his actions to be misrepresented to his countrymen.

Admiral Plumridge sailed for Kiel on September 27, having been detained until then by a heavy gale, his departure reducing the squadron in the Gulf of Finland to twelve ships-of-the-line. On October 3, six days after Plumridge's squadron had sailed,

a despatch arrived from the Board of Admiralty, dated the 26th, expressing surprise at the departure of the French fleet, as the British Ambassador in Paris had been informed by the French Minister of Marine that, in a letter written on the 13th, Admiral Parseval had clearly indicated his intention of remaining with the greater part of his fleet and all his steamers so long as the British force remained in the Baltic.

This was no doubt the case. But the efforts of the British Admiralty to induce Admiral Parseval to reconsider his decision of September 12, and associate himself with what he rightly considered a most rash and hazardous undertaking, had determined him to lose no time in putting his fleet out of reach of further importunity. And he had acted very wisely.

The remainder of their lordships' communication was occupied by cautions to Napier to prevent the Russian fleet getting out into the Gulf of Finland, although, as a matter of fact, no Russian fleet would have ventured out in the weather which now prevailed :—

"We have approved your orders for sending home the *Cumberland* and *Ajax*, but the withdrawal of the French fleet renders any further diminution of the strength of your line-of-battle ships inexpedient; and the sailing ships and even the three-deckers must be detained till the last moment consistent with their safety.

"An autumn cruise for the Russian fleet in the Baltic, when the British fleet had abandoned it, would bring dishonour on our arms. At all hazards, so great an evil must be averted; and you will remember that in former wars, when the power of steam was unknown, a squadron of British line-of-battle ships maintained the blockade in the Baltic till the end of November."

In a second letter of the same date, the Admiral was informed that "their lordships desired to call his attention to the fact that they had not sanctioned the return of the sailing ships."

It was certainly true that the Admiralty, in its collective capacity, had not sanctioned the return of the sailing ships, but two of its members, the First Lord and the First Sea Lord, had both ordered them home, and the ships had been sent to Kiel, in accordance with their instructions, before the contradictory orders from the Board arrived.

In acknowledging the receipt of these fresh instructions, which were the more extraordinary, as in a letter from the Board, dated the 23rd, he had been told that their lordships did not

intend to fetter his judgment as to anchorage, and that for the safety of the ships he was, as autumn advanced, gradually to withdraw to the southward and wait the time they might think fit to recall him from the Baltic, Napier remonstrated vigorously against them :—

"I cannot conceive that a Russian fleet will leave the Baltic at this season; as for cruising, either on the coast of Sweden or Prussia, I look upon it as impossible, or, indeed, in any other part of the Baltic; but I will watch the enemy as long as it can be done with safety to the fleet, and shall take care that no Russian ships will get into the North Sea.

"Their Lordships desire me to remember that in former wars, when steam was not known, a squadron of British line-of-battle ships maintained the blockade in the Baltic till the end of November. But there is a great difference *between the Baltic and the Gulf of Finland.* No ships remained in the Gulf after the 1st of October, and the Baltic was blockaded from the Swedish port of Carlscrona—which is interdicted to us—and from the Belt. The journals of Sir James Saumarez are now before me.

"Their Lordships, in their letter of the 23rd of September, do not intend to fetter my judgment as to the port or anchorage I may decide best for the service I am on; but in their letter of the 26th, their lordships *throw aside the safety of the ships,* and, *at all hazards,* I am to prevent the Russian fleet coming into the Baltic, because it will bring disgrace to our arms. I do not know where the fleet will be safe—certainly not here, with a N.E. wind, nor at Baro Sound, with a S.W. wind. They may show themselves out of Sweaborg a few hours, but certainly not to cruise; and I do not see how such a proceeding would bring disgrace on our arms. Their Lordships may rely upon my doing my utmost to comply with their orders, *short of hazarding the fleet.*

"I have now been here twelve days, and it has blown a gale of wind from S.S.E. to N.N.W., with the exception of two days. How we should have fared had the wind been from N. to N.E. I don't know; but it is certainly far from agreeable to have Revel right astern in a heavy gale of wind, depending upon our chains; for should the wind be heavy on a dark night, we could not depend upon our screws taking us to sea; and, in the event of our parting the cables, we must go on shore. That is the opinion of many here."

To Sir James Graham, who, waiving all his previous orders to Napier to begin sending the ships home or to Kiel, had, by the same mail, sent him instructions to hold on to the last moment, even with the sailing three-deckers, the Admiral wrote :—

"If I have done wrong in sending the sailing ships to Kiel, I have been led into it by your letter of the 29th of August. . . .

"Again, in your letter of the 12th of September you say: 'We shall send you no positive orders respecting the withdrawal of the fleet

in the Baltic, which must be effected at all events *gradually*, till we know what is the intention of the French as to remaining there, etc.' The French Admiral showed me his orders, dated the 30th of August, and a telegraphic despatch of the 1st of September, showing that the English Government were aware of their intention; so that, in point of fact, they not only got orders to go home, but *had actually sailed*, before I sent our ships to Kiel. You may then judge of my surprise when you tell me you only knew of their withdrawal *on the 25th of September*.

" I have not the least idea that the Russians will move from their ports at this season of the year. They are much too wise to do anything of the sort; and as for their finding their way into the North Sea, I look upon that as impossible. If they did contemplate anything of the sort, a squadron in the Belt and one at Elsinore would watch them much better than in the Gulf of Finland, which is very dangerous.

" . . . You may depend I will not leave the Baltic as long as is prudent. But as to the Gulf of Finland, I must use my own discretion."

The real explanation of the remarkable change which had taken place in the policy of the Admiralty, from the almost excessive caution of the first months of the Baltic campaign to the rashness which had marked the last three weeks, was the increasing pressure of public opinion. It was to placate public opinion that Sir James Graham—for it cannot be doubted that his was the paramount influence at the Board—had pressed upon the commanders of the combined fleets first the plan of General Jones and afterwards that of General Niel. It was to placate public opinion (had not the *Times* demanded it in a leading article ?)* that he had now ordered the blockade of the Gulf of Finland to be continued until the ice came, " at all hazards," preferring to jeopardize British ships and British lives rather than incur the very remote risk of the Russian fleet showing itself out of Cronstadt and Sweaborg for a few hours, which was as much as it would have dared to do. And it is with the same object in view that we shall now see him stoop to a transaction which is surely one of the most discreditable in the records of a British Government department !

* " If our fleet retires from the Baltic before the season is actually closed, and while time and opportunity still remain for action, the Russians will instantly sally forth into the seas thus conveniently vacated, will reoccupy the Aland Islands, hoist their flag again on the ruins of Bomarsund, parade their vessels along the coasts of Sweden and Denmark, and then issue a swaggering manifesto to the world, setting forth the ignominious retreat of the Allied squadrons with nothing accomplished, the triumphant resistance of the Imperial forces against infinitely superior numbers, and the final ascendancy of the Czar in the waters of the Baltic."

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE FALL OF SEBASTOPOL HOAX—DELANE'S LETTER—DISCREDITABLE CONDUCT OF THE ADMIRALTY

ON October 2, the Admiralty received Napier's report of September 25 on Sweaborg. On the same day, news reached England that Sebastopol had been captured by a *coup de main*, upon which the Secretary to the Board wrote to the Admiral as follows :—

"Having laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your letter of the 26th ultimo, reporting your having ordered Rear-Admiral Plumridge to proceed to Kiel with the squadron under his command to await their Lordships' directions, I am directed by their Lordships to acquaint you that this step has been taken without their orders.

"I am further directed to acquaint you that my Lords have ordered the *Holyrood* to proceed direct to Kiel, and that Admiral Plumridge has been directed to victual his ships for another month, and to hold himself in readiness to rejoin your Flag, if you should think it necessary to recall him for active operations, and my Lords have reason to believe that the French Squadron, which had been on their way out of the Baltic, have received orders to rejoin you."

On the 4th, full details of the supposed fall of the great fortress, which was unfortunately destined to defy the Allied armies for so many weary months, appeared in the newspapers. The *Times* was particularly badly caught, and the usually shrewd and cautious Delane, without apparently a moment's reflection whether the "glorious success" might not after all prove to be, what it really was, one of the most miserable hoaxes by which the editor of a great journal was ever victimized, caused two long "leaders" to be published.* The first was a flamboyant article on "the most splendid achievement of modern warfare—an exploit alike unequalled in magnitude, in rapidity and in its

* We observe that Delane's biographer, Mr. A. I. Dasent, is discreetly silent about the ridiculous figure which Delane's credulity caused his journal to cut on this occasion.

results," which article we can well believe the writer's brother-journalists took care that he should not be allowed to forget for the rest of his days. The second was an imperative demand, in the name of the British public, whose mouthpiece the *Times* claimed to be, that the "glorious success" in the Black Sea should be straightway followed up by an attack on one of the Russian fortresses in the Baltic :—

"The glorious success which has attended our army in the Black Sea is not likely, we suspect, to improve the feeling with which the public appear to regard the operations in the Baltic. . . .

"It is perfectly true that many of the results which were contemplated when the fleet first sailed for the Baltic have been realized. The ships of the Czar have been blockaded with ignominy in their own harbours, and vainly defied to combat day after day. The maritime commerce of Russia has been destroyed, its ports have been invaded, and its coast towns shown to be at our mercy. Above all, the vessels of war have been rigorously confined to their moorings, so that the Russian flag has been swept from the seas and a perfect safety assured for the commerce of the Allied Powers."

It is interesting to note these admissions of what the Baltic fleet had accomplished.

"But," proceeds the writer, "the truth is that the public, when convinced of the impotence of the Czar and his fortifications, began to look for results beyond those originally conceived, and when they saw that the only desire of the Russians was to escape a combat, felt a not unnatural desire that the combat should be forced upon them. Our enemy confessed his inferiority by skulking behind stone batteries, and the renown of these batteries stood him for some time in good stead; but when the prestige of such fortifications had been demolished at Bomarsund, it seemed as if nothing remained to protect him.

"Nobody can deny that the operations in the Baltic, as far as they have gone, have been conducted with great skill and with the best of results—a bloodless success. Bomarsund might be said almost to have been taken without the loss of a man, and a navigation of the most difficult and hazardous kind has been managed throughout without the loss of a single vessel. But just as Sir Robert Calder's victory was so dimmed by the brilliancy of Napier's conquests as to acquire the appearance of a failure, so the complete destruction of the enemy's power in the Black Sea is likely to contribute an unsatisfactory aspect to proceedings rather negatively than positively fortunate. Sir Charles Napier has bearded the Russians in their own ports; he has maintained in very perilous waters a blockade so effective that it has never been broken; and he will be able to return after accomplishing these objects with every ship under his command safe and sound. All this is excellent in its way, but,

after granite has been proved so weak and ships' guns so strong, *are we still to renounce the hope of doing anything more? Are Revel and Sweaborg and Helsingfors more impregnable than Sebastopol? Can even Cronstadt and Sweaborg be really beyond the reach of those Powers who in a ten days' campaign have conquered the Crimea and its garrison? . . .*

"It is highly desirable that we should come to some well-sustained conclusion respecting the operations really practical in these waters. That we can blockade the Czar in his harbours, insult his flag, and destroy his commerce is proved by experience; but, *if this is all we can do*, it remains to be considered whether it cannot be done at a less expenditure than that incurred by the despatch of a numerous and powerful fleet. We doubt whether such a conclusion is one that the country would very willingly accept. . . . At present we can only say that, *after having triumphed in the Black Sea, we are not likely to be content with merely holding our own in the Baltic.*"

The same day on which the aforegoing article appeared in the *Times*, its editor addressed to the commander of the Baltic fleet the following extraordinary epistle:—

"London, October 4, 1854.

"MY DEAR SIR CHARLES,—I have been out in the Black Sea, where I witnessed the landing of the Allied armies in the Crimea, or the two letters I found waiting for me should not have remained so long unanswered.

"As a friend, I am bound to tell you what perhaps no one else will have the frankness to write, that your conduct in the Baltic has caused extreme dissatisfaction to the Government and to the public, and has already gone far, very far, to tarnish your well-earned reputation.

"You know how unwilling I am to believe that you have done less than any other man could do; but I confess that your letters do not convince me that you should be unable to do nothing more (*sic*)* than the reduction of a petty fortress and the enforcement of a strict blockade. Of course, there are difficulties and great ones—of course, the weather is not the most propitious; but the country, and especially your friends, have been taught to think that you were the man to overcome difficulties, and that such a steam fleet as you have was almost independent of wind and weather. Since you have gone out, too, everything has tended to demonstrate more than ever the hollowness of Russian strength.

"Her best armies have been routed by a mob of Turks, and have recoiled before a paltry fort,† after a siege in which they had exhausted all their strength and skill. *Now, too, their own great fortress of the Crimea, which it was thought would require a regular investment and a prolonged siege, has been taken by assault within ten days after the troops had landed,*

* This phrase is certainly a strange one to find in a letter penned by an editor of the *Times*.

† Silistria.

their fleet burnt, and their army captured or destroyed. Do you think that after this the public will be satisfied with an excess of 'discretion,' which preserves your fleet, indeed, from all injury, but which leaves the enemy the same impunity? I assure you they will not; and the *Government* will be supported by the *country* in removing you from your command, if nothing more is done than you have yet attempted. In the profession, and among the officers of your fleet especially, your conduct is most *severely condemned.* They declare that Revel, Helsingfors, or Cronstadt itself, might have been long since destroyed—that you, thirty years ago, would have been the man to do it; but that now *your nerve* has failed you, and that you think of *nothing* but getting safe back to Portsmouth. *I am sure* there is no truth in this; but it is said everywhere; and the fact that, with so splendid a force, you alone find the Russians unassailable and invincible, when everyone, with much less means, defeats their armies and destroys their forts, is strong against you. For your own sake, then, and for that of your friends who have so long supported you and asserted your claims, do make an effort, cease to find difficulties—*any old woman can find them.* Strike a blow which shall be worthy of your once great reputation, and of the country, and eclipse, if you can, the glory of the capture of Sebastopol by the destruction of Cronstadt.

"Unless you do something of the kind, you are a lost man; you will return like Sir R. Calder, and perhaps some of your subalterns will reap all the laurels you have failed to gain.

"This, I know, is not pleasant reading, but it is *the truth,* and even Admirals should hear the truth sometimes. Pray, believe it, and act so that your friends will not have to *blush for you,* and to hear even Dundas extolled at your expense. You have to choose between glory and *disgrace,* for the failure to achieve one will ensure the other.

"I give you the best proof of my friendship in writing this letter; and am, my dear Sir Charles, with sincere good wishes, very faithfully yours.

"JOHN T. DELANE."

When it is considered that this letter was written by a newspaper editor of thirty-seven, whose knowledge of naval matters was necessarily of the slightest, to the commander-in-chief of a British fleet nearly twice his age, who had served his Sovereign and country at sea with the greatest distinction for over half a century, we think the reader will agree with us in regarding it as one of the most impertinent and presumptuous epistles ever penned. Mr. A. I. Dasent has certainly shown a praiseworthy discretion in omitting it from his biography of Delane.

Delane's letter reached Napier on October 10, by the Admiralty steamer, and with it came two other communications, written on the same day as that of the editor of the *Times:* an official despatch from the Board and a private letter from Admiral

Berkeley. After reading the former, Napier, to use his own words, was "utterly stupefied," as well he might be. For the Board had perverted his report of September 25 on Sweaborg in the most extraordinary manner, and now urged him to make an attack on the fortress, which, so far as regarded the present campaign, he had repeatedly declared to be unassailable, recommending him to choose a day at the latter end of October, when Cronstadt would be frozen up and Sweaborg open. But it is necessary to give this truly remarkable document *in extenso* :—

"We have received and duly considered your despatch of the 25th of September, No. 516.

"For reasons stated to you in our order of the 26th of September, No. 713, we are not prepared to sanction the withdrawal of the fleet from the entrance of the Gulf of Finland until ice shall have closed it, or until you have received any further orders.

"Baro Sound is in most winds a safe anchorage, and your command of steam power, whilst the channel is open, will enable you to keep your position.

"Your reconnaissance of Revel, and your report on its defences, are clear and satisfactory, and may be turned to useful account on some future occasion.

"Your reconnaissance of Sweaborg gives rise to more pressing and serious considerations.

"You desire us not for a moment to suppose that Sweaborg cannot be attacked, and you proceed to point out in detail the precise mode in which the operation ought to be conducted according to your deliberate judgment on a careful review of all the difficulties and dangers.

"You say that troops might be most usefully employed in aid of the ships. But you do not say that military co-operation appears to you indispensable to ensure naval success. On the contrary, you express an opinion that, if your plan of attack by the ships were adopted, you are quite certain that the fortress would be laid in ruins, and most probably an entrance opened to the ships.

"What, then, are the obstacles to the immediate attempt? If the diminution of your force be one, *we have reason to believe that the French fleet has been ordered to rejoin you off Sweaborg*, and by telegraph we have directed Rear-Admiral Plumridge to hold himself in readiness at Kiel to return to the Gulf of Finland, if he hears from you that the presence and assistance of his squadron are required.

"You intimate an opinion that the uncertainty of the weather at this advanced period of the year is an objection to the attack. *You may choose your day and your opportunity*, and some risk must always attend every great operation.

"You anticipate an attack by the Russian fleet if many of your ships be crippled or destroyed. We are always reminded that the Russians are most unwilling to navigate the Gulf of Finland in line-of-battle ships

when autumn has commenced; and Cronstadt is always locked up by ice fourteen days before Sweaborg is closed. The attack, therefore, on Sweaborg might be made *towards the end of October*, with least danger of attack from the Cronstadt portion of the Russian fleet.

"*Recent events in the Black Sea will not encourage the Russians to attempt any enterprise of more than usual hazard and daring at this precise moment.* (These 'recent events' were, of course, the supposed capture of Sebastopol.)

"It is true that additional boats having Lancaster guns and mortar vessels have not been sent into the Baltic, since we were led to believe that Cronstadt and Sweaborg were unassailable by naval means alone.

"Your second reconnaissance of Sweaborg opens a new view, and the presence or absence of a *few guns* of an improved construction, or *even of mortar vessels*, cannot make the whole difference between a possible and an impossible attack."

Here there is a *positive order* to Napier to "*choose a fine day and his own opportunity at the end of October,*" and attack Sweaborg. But, since the Admiralty could not fail to be aware of the desperate character of the undertaking, and that if Napier allowed himself to be goaded by their despatch and Delane's insolent letter into attempting it, the result might be disastrous, they hasten to shift all the responsibility of the attack from their own shoulders to those of the Admiral; and the despatch thus concludes:—

"This *order* is founded entirely on your own last report. The final decision must rest entirely on yourself. If the attack on Sweaborg, in present circumstances, be desperate, it must on no account be undertaken by you. If, calculating the ordinary chances of war, and on a full consideration of the strength of the enemy's fortress and fleets, you shall be of the opinion that Sweaborg can be laid in ruins, it will be your duty, with the concurrence of the French Admiral, not to omit the opportunity.

"Given under our hands this 4th day of October, 1854.

(Signed) "M. F. BERKELEY.
"PETER RICHARDS."

But to appreciate fully the character of this extraordinary communication, it must be examined in detail.

The despatch says: "*You desire us not for a moment to suppose that Sweaborg cannot be attacked.*"

Quite true. Napier had pointed out the precise mode of attack. *One with ships alone,* but adding that success would be doubtful and many ships would be lost. *Another with ships, guns, gunboats, 13-inch mortars on the islands, and a vast supply of*

shot, shells and rockets, in addition to his ships. This method of attack he considered certain.

The despatch continues : " *On the contrary, you express an opinion that if your plan of attack by the ships were adopted, you are quite certain that the fortress would be laid in ruins, and most probably an entrance opened to the ships.*"

Napier had never said anything of the sort, and the imputation is so clumsy a perversion of his report of September 25, that it is marvellous that men of ordinary intelligence could stoop to such methods, even to serve a desperate purpose. What he *did* say was that, if the attack were made by the ships alone, success would be very doubtful. The ships would be set on fire by red-hot shot and shells, and be left in no condition to meet the Russian fleet afterwards, and that, if attempted *at that season of the year,* he did not know how many would be lost. If, however, the means which he considered essential : 13-inch mortars, gunboats, Lancaster guns and so forth, were forthcoming, and a bombardment kept up by them until the wooden buildings of Sweaborg were on fire and an evident impression made on the fortress, then, but not till then, " the ships should close in and finish the work." But none of these means had been furnished him, and it was impossible for them to be supplied until the following year. How, then, could the Admiralty pretend that he contemplated an *immediate* attack ?

" *What, then, are the obstacles to the immediate attempt ?* "

The answer is the want of the means which Napier had pointed out as necessary to ensure success.

" *Recent events in the Black Sea will not encourage the Russians to attempt any enterprise of more than usual hazard and daring at this precise moment.*"

Recent events in the Black Sea were a miserable deception ; more recent events showed that the British fleet had suffered severely ; and had that been known at the Admiralty, their instructions would have been of a very different tenor.

" *Your second reconnaissance of Sweaborg opens a new view, and the presence or absence of a few guns of an improved construction, or even of mortar-vessels, cannot make the whole difference between a possible and impossible attack.*"

Napier's second reconnaissance of Sweaborg had opened no new view *to him ;* and the presence or absence of a " few guns,"

as their lordships were pleased to call what he had asked for, just made all the difference between the *possible* and the *impossible.*

It would be interesting, indeed, to know the exact connection between the orders sent to the commander of the Baltic fleet by the Editor of the *Times* and the orders sent him by the Board of Admiralty, both communications written on the same day (October 4), both brought to Napier at the same time by the Admiralty steamer. Delane, it is true, demanded the destruction of Cronstadt, the Board urged that Sweaborg should be laid in ruins; but this circumstance will not, we are inclined to think, affect the conclusion at which any unprejudiced mind can hardly help arriving, namely, that it was the autocrat of Fleet Street, before whose frown Governments trembled, who dictated the step taken by the Admiralty. Note with what superb arrogance he threatens Napier:—

"Do you think that after this the public will be satisfied with an excess of 'discretion,' which preserves your fleet, indeed, from all injury, but which leaves the enemy the same impunity? I assure you they will not; and the *Government* will be supported by the *country* in removing you from your command, if nothing more is done than you have yet attempted."

Yes; the *country*—that is to say, the *Times*, with its immense influence on public opinion—will demand the dismissal of Napier, and the Government will not dare to refuse.

It is not difficult to reconstruct for ourselves the little comedy of October 4. In the morning, appears the article in the *Times*, drawing an invidious comparison between the supposed "glorious success" in the Black Sea and the results achieved in the Baltic, and demanding that vigorous measures shall be undertaken against one of the Baltic fortresses. The Government, or, at any rate, the Admiralty, becomes alarmed. Sir James Graham, or one of his colleagues on the Board, communicates with Delane, with the result that the Admiralty, pretending to misunderstand the purport of Napier's report of September 25, goads him on to attack Sweaborg, while Delane backs their lordships' instructions by the insolent and threatening letter we have cited elsewhere. That Delane should have called for the destruction of *Cronstadt*, instead of Sweaborg, tends, if anything, to strengthen our case, for it is obvious that,

if he had been indiscreet enough to mention the latter, the understanding between him and the Admiralty would have been apparent to the meanest intelligence, had Napier ever decided to make their respective letters public ; and this was a contingency which would have been agreeable to neither party.

What a bizarre situation, is it not ? Fleet Street dictating the policy of Whitehall ! The First Lord of the Admiralty meekly taking his instructions from the Editor of the *Times !* For Delane there is perhaps some excuse, though we find it difficult to excuse the vindictiveness with which he subsequently pursued the old Admiral who had had the moral courage to refuse to risk his fleet at his insolent dictation. The great editor's patriotism is undoubted, and, misled by his own conceit and irresponsible correspondents, he probably really believed that the Baltic fleet was capable of achieving what its commander and the other admirals well knew to be impossible. But for the Admiralty, and, in particular, for Sir James Graham, there can be no excuse at all.

But did the Admiralty really hope that Napier would be so rash as to run amok at Sweaborg, with the probability of a disastrous repulse ? It is pretty certain that Admiral Berkeley, though he had signed the official despatch, did not, for in his private letter to the Admiral, which accompanied it, he writes as follows :—

" Your last letter respecting Sweaborg and an attack with Lancaster guns so completely differs from the account after your previous reconnaissance, and the unanimous opinion of your council of naval officers, that we have been forced to write you officially to show you that, as was originally intended, *the responsibility of attack or no attack rests entirely with yourself and your French colleague.*

" Your letter would make all who have read it believe that the responsibility was too heavy for your shoulders, and *that you would willingly transfer it to the Board.* This must not be. Every act of the Board proves how thoroughly and implicitly you were trusted to decide whether or not an attack was feasible on any part of the enemy's fortifications.

" I have, and am still prepared so to do, defended you from unjust attacks. But you must not endeavour to get rid of the responsibility attached to your position.

" Through good and evil report you must act with firmness, and according to your own judgment. *The public will do you justice in the long run ;* as I firmly believe that you will do all that can be done or attempted with propriety."

We are, therefore, forced to the conclusion that the Board did not wish Napier to attack Sweaborg, but that the instructions of October 4 were sent to propitiate Delane and the public whose oracle he was, and to shift the responsibility of NOT making the attack from the Admiralty to the Admiral. The Board must therefore be exonerated from the suspicion of being willing to sacrifice the Baltic fleet in order to satisfy public clamour, though had Napier allowed himself to be goaded by their lordships' orders and the threats and insults of Delane—of which, let us hope, to their credit, they were unaware—into embarking upon this desperate venture and losing his ships, the responsibility for the disaster would have lain at their door. But, allowing such to be the case, their conduct, so far as Napier himself is concerned, appears in an even worse light; indeed, it is difficult to conceive a more discreditable transaction than this wilful perversion of the Admiral's plans to serve their own purposes.

In a letter to the *Morning Advertiser*, written on December 10, 1856, Napier declares that the three communications he had just received—the despatch from the Board and the letters of Admiral Berkeley and Delane—" together came like a clap of thunder " :—

" The Admiral," writes Earp, " saw that his previous reputation was deliberately sacrificed to save an incapable Government, though even this unworthy course would fail to save it, as was afterwards the case. The obloquy he could have borne, and he had no fears of investigation into the most minute circumstances connected with the campaign; but the faithlessness of those who had praised him throughout, almost to fulsomeness, was more than an honest, straightforward mind, unversed in the wiles of statesmanship, could bear. To use the words of those around him ' he seemed for a while utterly prostrated '—a feeling into which all who have made a reputation and find it in danger of being destroyed by unfair means, can readily enter."

He soon recovered himself, however, and, resolved not to be driven either by public clamour or official fears into acting against his own judgment, he addressed the same day to the Admiralty the following dignified reply :—

" Before I received your letter of the 4th of October, I had written the accompanying letter, No. 558, giving my reasons for withdrawing from this anchorage; and, notwithstanding their Lordships' letter of the 4th inst., I still think it my duty to persist in my intention.

" I have already given my reasons for withdrawing the sailing ships, and I thought I was following up Sir James's wishes (*vide* his letter of 29th of August).

" Neither this anchorage nor Baro Sound are fit for a fleet in the winter. My letter will clearly point out my reasons. Their Lordships ask me, if I think Sweaborg can be laid in ruins, why I do not attack it ? I reply that before the ships should go alongside the batteries, my plan was to have it first bombarded with ' *mortars, shells and rockets,*' from the Island, and with ' gunboats, Lancaster guns,' etc., for a day or two ; and then, when well bombarded, the ships should go alongside and finish the work. The *want of means* is one obstacle, the weather the next, why I do not attack it.

" Their Lordships tell me ' to choose my day.' There has not been a day since I have been here (Nargen) that it was possible to attack Sweaborg. It requires many days. The channels are studded with sunken rocks. They must be all sounded and buoyed. If it came on to blow, the fleet would inevitably be lost, and I should be unworthy the command I hold if I risked it. It would be a long operation. Their Lordships have not the most distant idea of the dangers. Whether the Russian fleet in Cronstadt would venture out if we were disabled, I know not ; but the Sweaborg fleet would.

" I have never altered my opinion that Sweaborg must first be attacked by ' *mortars, shells and gunboats.*' But I never would have advised them to be sent here at this season.

" My second reconnaissance was never intended to open a new view. The view I first took and the last were the same.

" Their Lordships say, the final decision must rest with me, and, if the attack be desperate, it must on no account be undertaken. I look upon it that no man in his senses would undertake to attack Sweaborg at this season of the year ; and, even in a fine season, I doubt much the success, *without the means I have pointed out.*

" A telegraphic despatch has stopped the French Admiral—which I am glad of—his presence would be useless ; and I have directed Admiral Plumridge not to come here for the same reason.

" When a Council of War composed of five admirals, viz., Vice-Admiral Parseval and myself, Rear-Admirals Penaud, Chads and Seymour, and in whose opinions a sixth (Rear-Admiral Martin) concurred, had given their opinions that ' *neither our resources nor the season* would permit an attack upon Sweaborg,' I should have thought that both their Lordships and the public would have been satisfied ; and I beg further to tell their Lordships that there is not an Admiral in the British service who would have ventured to attack such a fortress at this season of the year. As their Lordships have so frequently returned to this question, it leads me to believe that, notwithstanding the praises they have heaped upon me for my conduct in the Baltic, and judging from the altered tone of their letters, I have reason to believe I have lost the confidence of their Lordships. If that is the case, I shall be *perfectly ready to resign my command. But as long as I hold it, I will do what I think is best for the good of Her Majesty's Service and for the safety of the fleet I command,* which I think

is greatly endangered by our present position, and we are risking our ships to no adequate purpose."

And to Admiral Berkeley he wrote :—

" I never was more astonished in my life than on receiving your letter. I have read over my reports on Sweaborg, and where they differ I am at a loss to know, unless that in my second report I point out the preparations for attack are of more importance than the first, and that is after still closer reconnaissance, and I most distinctly said that at this season of the year the thing was quite impossible ; we have nothing but heavy gales.

" I was perfectly aware that any attack on Sweaborg would be on my own responsibility, and I never wanted to throw it on the Board, but I distinctly stated that nothing could be done at this season of the year, and that was my opinion and the opinion of the French Admirals and Chads also ; and my reconnaissance never changed that opinion, and I do think it most unjust that you should write to me in the way you have done, and, so far from thinking of attacking Sweaborg now, I look upon the fleet as lying in a most dangerous position, and I never attempted to get rid of my responsibility. You tell me through good and evil report I must act with firmness and according to my own judgment ; and it is just on that account that, so far from thinking of attacking Sweaborg at this season of the year, I am making preparations to withdraw the squadron from the Gulf. It is too bad that both Graham and you, who desired me to begin to withdraw my ships, should now throw me overboard. You have no idea of the weather here or the dangers of the coast, or you would not write to me as you do. I hear from a quarter that I know to be good authority, that you are all dissatisfied with me. I cannot help it ; I could do no more. I proposed the attack on Bomarsund after returning from Cronstadt ; it was done, and after that the season was too late, and everybody opposed it ; but these engineers have set all this going and ruined my reputation with the public. There is not a man in England who would venture near Sweaborg at this time of the year, the dangers and difficulties are so great. I wish to God you were here to see them !

" Do you never look at the charts, where one half the sunken rocks are not shown, and ask yourself if you would risk your fleet amongst them ? Not a man on earth would do it, and it is hard that my reputation should be blasted by engineers and others who know nothing of the localities. When we reconnoitred it the other day, it was all we could do to keep clear of the rocks in a small steamer."

Napier would perhaps have better consulted his dignity had he ignored the outrageous communication of Delane, or, in his reply, have given the ignorance and presumption of the writer the castigation which they so richly merited. But he was

under considerable obligations to Delane, who had opened the columns of the *Times* to his letters on the state of the Navy and had espoused his cause warmly in the controversy with Lord John Russell over the Mediterranean command in 1851. Moreover, Delane claimed that the letter was "the best proof of his friendship," although there was little enough of friendship, or even of ordinary gentlemanly feeling, about his subsequent treatment of the Admiral, whom he assailed—or permitted one of his staff to assail—in a particularly cruel manner even after the grave had closed over the old sailor;* and, as we have observed elsewhere, Napier was naturally reluctant, as were some of the greatest of his contemporaries, to offend one who exercised, through his journal, so immense an influence on public opinion. Hence, we find him replying to what he merely describes as "a very cutting letter," in studiously moderate terms, merely pointing out that his correspondent was demanding impossibilities, that the Press was unable to appreciate the difficulties with which he had to contend, and that the officers of the fleet who talked so much of what he ought to have done would have acted in the same manner had his responsibility been theirs :—

"*Duke of Wellington*, Nargen, October 10, 1854.

"You, sir, have written me a very cutting letter, which I have no time to answer at present; you know very little of the state of this country, or I am sure you would not have done it.

"I wish you had been here for the last five weeks and seen the weather we have had. You would have thought that, so far from going up to Sweaborg or Cronstadt, you would have wished yourself out of the Gulf.

"You ought to remember when we first came up here we had to look for an anchorage. That found, we reconnoitred Sweaborg, and with the plans in our hands we judged it unassailable; the French then joined, and we went into Baro Sound for a day or two; from hence we reconnoitred Cronstadt, which we thought, and still think, was unattackable.

"We returned, and instead of finding 2,000 men, which I asked for to attack Bomarsund, they sent 10,000—it was taken; they returned to France, and it has been blowing a gale of wind ever since; and still you and the public think we ought to have gone into unknown channels amongst sunken rocks, and attacked Sweaborg, and even gone up to Cronstadt.

"I have no hesitation in saying had I done so, I should have lost

* See the *Times* review of General Elers Napier's "Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.," January 23, 1862.

ADMIRAL SIR CHARLES NAPIER, K.C.B.
Towards the close of his life.

To face p. 360.

Photo by Stephen Cribb, Portsmouth.

MEMORIAL TO ADMIRAL SIR CHARLES NAPIER, K.C.B.,
In Victoria Park, Portsmouth, erected by Non-Commissioned Officers, Marines and Seamen.

[To face p. 371.

the fleet. The work here is not fair fighting batteries, but it is fighting rocks and shoals, and if, instead of sitting in your office, you were here, you would find it no joke. I am aware I am exposed to the censure of the Press, but then the Press knows nothing of the difficulties, and my character as an officer is attacked by people who are no judges. You say many of the squadron abuse me. I don't believe one of them, with all their bombast, would have done anything. The fleet is now lying in a most dangerous anchorage, and I hope you will not have to record the loss of some of them.

"Yours truly,
"CHAS. NAPIER."

On October 9—five days after the instructions to attack Sweaborg had been sent to Napier and the day before they were received by the Admiral—the astounding intelligence reached England that Sebastopol was not taken—that the report of its capture was a miserable hoax, but a hoax that had completely taken in the British people, the British Government, the British Press, and the Admiralty to boot! This, of course, entirely changed the situation as regarded future operations in the Baltic; what the Admiralty had considered, or affected to consider, necessary on the 4th, had now become to the last degree inexpedient; and the Board lost not a moment in instructing Napier that "an attack on Sweaborg was no longer possible," while their order to him to remain in the Gulf of Finland till the ice came and *at all hazards*, against which the Admiral had remonstrated so vigorously, was cancelled, and he was told to use his own discretion in leaving the Gulf. At the same time, Admiral Plumridge was ordered home by telegraph,* and the orders which had been hurriedly sent to Admiral Parseval by the French Government to rejoin the British fleet were now as hurriedly countermanded. The Admiralty despatch to Napier was as follows:—

"With reference to former orders, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint you that the French Government has countermanded the order given to Admiral Parseval to return with the French fleet to the entrance to the Gulf of Finland, and that, *an attack on Sweaborg being no longer possible*, Rear-Admiral Plumridge has

* It is to be noted that Plumridge was directed by the Board "to take advantage of the weather" to perform the short voyage from Kiel to the Downs, and that, on the way, the flagship, the *Neptune*, got ashore. And yet, a few days before, Napier had, though lying in the Gulf of Finland, at the beginning of the Arctic winter, been told "to choose a fine day" to attack Sweaborg.

been ordered by telegraph to return to England forthwith with the shi under his command from Kiel.

"I am further directed by their Lordships to acquaint you that y are now at liberty to exercise your discretion in withdrawing to the sou ward with the remainder of the fleet under your orders; taking care leave a light squadron of observation, so long as weather will permit, the entrance of the Gulf, in order to watch any movement of the Rus fleet and prevent its entrance unobserved into the Baltic; and als maintain an effective blockade so long as prudence will permit, before ice shall have closed the channel."

CHAPTER XXIX

WITHDRAWAL OF THE FLEET FROM THE GULF OF FINLAND—CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE ADMIRALTY AND THE FIRST LORD—RETURN TO ENGLAND

ON October 19, Napier, having now received discretionary power to quit the Gulf of Finland, left Nargen with his ships, and on the 22nd anchored at Kiel. He had already anticipated the Admiralty's instructions as to establishing a blockade of the mouth of the Gulf of Finland, and had given Captain Watson discretionary orders as to his withdrawal from before Sweaborg.

From Kiel the Admiral went to Hamburg, to pay a short visit to his old friend Colonel Hodges, and from that city wrote to his daughter, Mrs. Jodrell :—

"October 26th, 1854.

"You will know of our arrival at Kiel. I have not been well, but am better since I came here. I have had much annoyance; they seem to want to throw the blame upon me for not doing impossibilities, and Graham has behaved very ill.

"I have written him a very sharp letter and to the Admiralty also, and told them that, if they are not satisfied, they had better remove me; so I suppose they will.

"Four of the ships have been on shore, but, thank God, are not damaged. This is a very fine city. I am with Hodges, who has become a perfect diplomatist.

"I have not heard a word from the Admiralty since my arrival, so cannot tell you what my movements are to be, but I hope home. I long to see you all after the long and wearisome blockade.

"God bless you, my dearest child,

"Your affectionate father,

"CHAS. NAPIER."

On the same day, he received a despatch from the Admiralty in reply to his letter of the 10th, wherein he had pointed out how entirely the Board had misunderstood his report of September 25. But, to his intense indignation, instead of finding that the

expressions used in the Board's previous despatch had been withdrawn or modified, he was informed that " their Lordships were fully satisfied with the reasons he had assigned for not undertaking to attack Sweaborg after it had become known to him that the ships under the orders of Vice-Admiral Parseval-Deschênes had been withdrawn ; and their Lordships might also have been satisfied with the decision adopted by him on the joint report of the flag-officers referred to, if the reports of the French and English military officers, transmitted in his letters of the 29th of August and 7th of September, had not contained adverse opinions, and if his own letter of the 25th of September had not afterwards expressly informed their Lordships that they were not to suppose for a moment that Sweaborg could not be attacked."

We may here observe that Napier never did assign as a reason for not attacking Sweaborg the absence of the French fleet. The opinions of the flag-officers against attacking Sweaborg were unanimous ; the opinions of the military officers—General Jones and General Niel—were diametrically opposed to each other, and Napier had no power of following either one or the other, even if he had wished to do so. Why, then, should blame be attached to him ?

The Admiral had certainly informed the Board that " it was not to suppose for one moment that Sweaborg could not be attacked." But it was with the appliances that he had pointed out, and the Board, after deliberately perverting his report, still persisted in adhering to its misinterpretation.

No notice was taken in this despatch of Napier's offer to resign his command. This was not the object of the Admiralty, which was to make him the scapegoat of the public disappointment, whilst holding the command.

It is impossible for us, within the limits of the present volume, to do more than summarize the lengthy correspondence which now ensued between Napier and the Board, and between the Admiral and Sir James Graham.

On October 26, Napier sent a long and vigorous remonstrance to the Board, and received in reply another unsatisfactory letter, in which he was informed that " their Lordships could not with confidence express satisfaction with the decision taken at Ledsund not to attack Sweaborg after the fall of Bomarsund."

What was this but censure, though the Admiralty subsequently declared that no censure on Napier's conduct was intended ?

Again the Admiral appealed to the Board, protesting in the most emphatic terms against the manner in which his letters had been perverted, and declaring that if he had lost its confidence, he was ready to resign his command ; and this he repeated in a private letter to the First Lord.

The only reply he received from the Admiralty was a denial that they had received a report on Sweaborg prior to July 24 ; although Napier had forwarded Admiral Chads's report of June 14 and his own of July 18 to the First Lord, who appeared to have forgotten them altogether, and sheltered himself under a report of May 30, which was made before Napier had seen Sweaborg.

Their lordships concluded their letter by informing the Admiral that they would not permit an officer under their orders to suppose that they determined to deliberate upon one part of his statements and to ignore others.

Discreditable as was the treatment which the Admiral received from the Board in its collective capacity, that which he experienced at the hands of the First Lord was even worse. On October 17 he wrote to Napier :—

" I was not prepared even at that time [the end of August] for the immediate departure of the French army after the capture of Bomarsund. . . . Much less was I prepared for the withdrawal of the French squadron from the combined naval operations almost simultaneously with the departure of the army as soon as Bomarsund had been destroyed."

This is quite incorrect ; the decision was taken in consequence of orders from the French Government, dated August 29, and communicated to the British Government on September 1. It is true that Admiral Parseval, notwithstanding these orders, had intended to remain with Napier, but, as we have seen, the importunities of Sir James Graham and the Admiralty had driven him away.

In alluding to General Jones's report the First Lord says :—

" It made a great impression here, and raised a strong presumption that, with the aid of the military force then present with the fleet, the works at Sweaborg might be destroyed, and that the month of September afforded ample time for the operation."

Whatever impression that report may have made on the First Lord and the Board of Admiralty, it made none whatever on the French Generals or the Allied Admirals, who at once rejected it.

The right honourable gentleman continues :—

"On the 5th of September you sent us the observations of General Baraguay d'Hilliers and General Niel.

"General Baraguay d'Hilliers says expressly, after having reconnoitred Sweaborg himself, together with General Niel, 'We partake of the opinion of General Jones. Sweaborg may be attacked and taken by the fleets, if they think fit to make on that fortress a serious attack.'"

General Jones never expressed the opinion that Sweaborg could be taken by the fleets alone ; his plan was a combined attack by the naval and military forces. Baraguay d'Hilliers had mistaken the purport of his report, as Sir James Graham very well knew. As for General Jones's proposal to disembark 5,000 men on the island of Bak Holmen, both the French Generals had pronounced it "impossible at this dangerous period of the year."

The First Lord next proceeds to distort General Niel's report :—

"General Niel went further, and said that without any military co-operation, eight or ten sail-of-the-line could lay the works in ruins in two hours . . . and *he intimated very distinctly an opinion that the attack ought to be made.*"

General Niel never intimated such an opinion. On the contrary, he expressed himself as very doubtful about the success of the plan he had suggested. "*But,*" he wrote, "*ships are very complicated machines ; very easy to set on fire. Such an operation is bold. It has never been done that I know of, and it does not come within my province to advise it.*" And it is to be noted that even the Board of Admiralty, in its despatch to Napier of September 12, admitted this :—

"But General Niel, at the same time, remarks that so bold an operation has not to his knowledge been yet attempted by ships against forts, and that it is not his province to advise it."

It is, indeed, astonishing to find a person holding so high an official position as Sir James Graham condescending to such paltry methods of controversy!

The letter concludes :—

" Then came your own second reconnaissance of Sweaborg and a plan of naval attack which you considered practicable. We were anxious, if the French and English forces could be reunited, that it should have been tried this year, before the immense fleet which had been assembled retreated from the Baltic ; but our sailing ships having gone to Kiel, and the French squadron being on its way home, the opportunity was lost ; and nothing now remains but to withdraw the line-of-battle ships and to await the moment when ice shall enclose the Russian fleet within the Gulf of Finland for the winter. No doubt, at the time of the Equinox there are heavy gales of wind in the Baltic ; it is a narrow sea ; and there is danger to large ships in maintaining this blockade even when at anchor. But war is not conducted without risks and dangers, and prudence consists in weighing them and firmness in overcoming them ; and nothing great by sea or land can be achieved without considerable peril, as your own experience and example have demonstrated."

The innuendo here is unmistakable, and must have been peculiarly galling to a man who had never lost an opportunity of attacking an enemy. Had Napier been so weak as to allow himself to be goaded into running his fleet against those granite walls, of which the First Lord appeared, in his earlier letters, to entertain so much dread, he would probably have lost the greater part of it ; and when called upon by the country to account for his folly, would certainly have received no protection from Sir James Graham.

On October 26, Napier replied to this disingenuous epistle in a long letter, which must have been very unpleasant reading for the recipient. We shall, however, only give the following passage, as we have already dissected the letter of the First Lord. It refers to the plan of General Jones :—

" I agreed with the French General and Admiral that Sweaborg could not be attacked at this season of the year, and I have no hesitation in saying that had we moved the ships and troops up to Miolo Roads and landed 5,000 men, we should not have brought off one man, and how many ships would have been lost I cannot say. After the capture and destruction of Bomarsund till I left Nargen there had not been more than three days fit for operations that required seven or eight, and then the ships and transports must have lain in Miolo—a position that might have done for a General, but certainly not for an Admiral."

On October 31, the First Lord again wrote :—

"I am very unwilling to be involved in a written controversy with you ; but you have brought it on yourself by your report of the 25th of September, after your second reconnaissance of Sweaborg. That report appeared to me entirely at variance with opinions previously expressed by you, and I certainly understood you then to say if you had mortars, rockets and Lancaster guns, you considered Sweaborg assailable by sea. In May you declared it to be unassailable by sea or land, and the Admiralty did not send you the appliances which in September you declared to be necessary, because they believed from your account they would be useless against a place which in the first instance you pronounced to be impregnable."

Here, it is to be observed, there is an admission that in September Napier did make application for other means than he had, but which the First Lord and the Admiralty had professed not to understand. An attempt is also made to mystify his report of May 30, made before he had seen Sweaborg. But the First Lord ignores the plans sent him by Napier on June 14 and July 18.

The letter continues :—

"I could not bring myself to believe that the want of Lancaster guns or even of mortars rendered a sea attack on your plan of the 25th of September impossible, if you had 25 sail-of-the-line reassembled before the place."

Not many weeks before Napier had 28 sail of the line before the place, when he was cautioned to beware of stone walls ; and a short time before the First Lord had thought 50,000 men and 200 gunboats necessary !

On November 6, Napier wrote the following letter, which concluded the correspondence between him and Sir James Graham :—

"I assure you, Sir James, it is far from my wish to enter into a controversy with you, but I will not admit that I have brought it on myself ; there is not a word in either my public or private letters that justifies the construction that you and the Admiralty have thought proper to put on them. My letter, in answer to their Lordships' last despatch, is plain enough ; but if their Lordships think fit to deliberate on one part of my letter and ignore another part, I can only protest against it, and I am quite prepared to defend myself against any unjust attacks that are made against me.

"I have documents enough in my possession to justify my conduct.

Enough has not been done to satisfy an 'impatient public,' as you called them. Some one must be blamed, and I am the chosen one; but I will not allow myself to be crushed because I could not do impossibilities. All the stir has been caused by the opinion of two engineers, in addition to the report of the capture of Sebastopol—not yet taken—though the fleet there is assisted by an army of 70,000 men; and I have been expected to take places much stronger, with a fleet alone; and the same people who so often warned me against unnecessarily risking my fleet are now dissatisfied because I did not expose them to destruction. I presume you have seen Captain Sulivan by this time; he is capable of opening the eyes of the Government, if they are not hermetically sealed. I have gone through the world with honour and credit to myself; and just as I am about to leave it, unworthy attempts are made to ruin my reputation; but they will fail and recoil on themselves."

In a letter to his stepson, Colonel Elers Napier, the Admiral expresses himself very freely as to the treatment he had received:—

"Kiel, November 15, 1854.

"I suppose people have now found out that stone walls are not so easily knocked down. I have seen letters from Dundas's fleet; they are singing small, and some of our wiseacres here are beginning to open their eyes. . . . Depend upon it, this attack on me, fanned, I have no doubt, by some of the Ministers, will not end here. I have accused them of perverting my letters, and I got a letter yesterday from the Admiralty, saying they could not permit an officer to accuse them of deliberately perverting letters; but not a word more—there it rests. I wrote Graham such a tickler that he has not ventured to answer, and he ought to have superseded me, if he durst; however, I shall wait quietly to see how the cat jumps.

". . . The ships were all surrounded by ice this morning; a couple more days of hard frost, and we shall be frozen in."

And to Lady Napier he writes:—

"November 25.

"We are still here, and no sign of being ordered home. The Admiralty are very wrong keeping ships here so late—it was never done before. I trust they are not going to keep us here all the winter. They have behaved very ill to me, and I believe they are annoying me on purpose, because I have been obliged to give them some home-truths. The weather is very cold, and will be much colder. I, however, keep my health."

On November 27, Napier sent orders to Captain Watson to withdraw from the Gulf of Finland, where the weather had become terrible, the cold being intense, while heavy gales, accompanied

by blinding snowstorms, were of constant occurrence. The ships and rigging presented the appearance of masses of ice, while the decks were frequently two feet deep in snow. During a snowstorm the *Euryalus* ran into the *Impérieuse*, with the result that both vessels suffered considerable damage, and it was a marvel that they did not go down. It was certainly high time to raise the blockade, and Captain Watson and the other officers of this squadron deserved the warmest praise for the courage and endurance they had displayed in the most trying circumstances. " I have not," wrote Napier to the Admiralty, " words to express my approval of the persevering conduct of Captain Watson and all his squadron. . . . Captain Watson began the blockade of Sweaborg early in the spring, and has continued there ever since with little intermission ; and I do not believe, in the height of the last war, a stricter or more dangerous blockade was ever kept up."

It was not until December 4—when the fleet was in daily, or rather nightly, anticipation of being frozen in—that it was at length ordered home by the Admiralty. Napier having previously been solicited to become a candidate for Marylebone, for which borough he had sat from 1842–1848, applied for permission to precede the fleet to England, on urgent private affairs. This request, however, was ungraciously refused by the Admiralty—their lordships probably had a shrewd idea as to the nature of these private affairs, and it would have ill-suited them to see the officer whom they had treated in so unworthy a manner in the House of Commons—and he was informed that, " if obliged to vacate his command, Admiral Chads must shift his flag to the *Duke of Wellington*, and execute the orders of the Admiralty."

Napier, wisely declining to strike his flag, left Kiel on December 7, and on the night of the 16th anchored at Spithead, with the proud satisfaction of having brought the Baltic fleet home without the loss of a single ship.

Sir Charles Napier had served his country under four Sovereigns, for fifty-five years, and during his long career had performed many meritorious and some brilliant exploits. Yet never had he deserved more the praise and gratitude of his countrymen than for what he did, and what he wisely refrained from doing, during the Baltic campaign of 1854.

First, let us consider what he had done.

In the second week in March, much earlier than a British squadron had ever attempted to navigate the stormy and treacherous waters of the Baltic before, he had led thither a badly-manned and worse-trained fleet, which he had subsequently brought to the highest pitch of discipline and efficiency. From early spring to the beginning of winter the coasts of Russia were so closely blockaded that her trade was paralysed, while British trade was enabled to proceed as uninterruptedly as in time of peace. Battle was repeatedly offered to the Czar's fleet, latterly with a greatly inferior force, yet not one of his warships dared to venture outside the harbours of Cronstadt or Sweaborg. Bomarsund, a strongly fortified place, and one bearing evidence of an intention to push that system of fortification to a much greater extent, was captured and completely demolished, and great damage was inflicted on enemy shipping and an immense quantity of war material destroyed. Finally, the Belts were safely passed much later than in former campaigns, and the fleet, though it had constantly been exposed to the greatest danger, was brought home without the loss of a single ship.

Now, as to what he had so wisely refrained from doing.

Let us consider what would probably have happened had Napier allowed himself to be goaded on by the clamour of an ill-informed public and an irresponsible Press, and by selfish and incapable Ministers, intimidated by that clamour, into risking his fleet against the fortifications of Sweaborg, with the utterly inadequate means at his disposal.

We must remember that so long as we had a superior fleet in the Baltic, the shores of Great Britain were protected and our commerce safeguarded, whilst Sweden and Denmark were retained in their neutrality. But behind that fleet there was nothing—no naval, no military reserve—at home to defend our coasts ; no fortifications adequate to protect our ports.

An attack on Sweaborg, in the circumstances in which Napier was placed, must have resulted, whatever measure of success may have attended it, in the crippling of so many of his ships, that the Russian fleet would afterwards have probably been able to engage him at a great advantage and destroy or put out of action the greater part of his squadron. Then nothing would have stood between the victorious Russians and the coasts of

Great Britain, and in a very short time the enemy's cruisers, and possibly the enemy's fleet with troops on board, would have been in British waters.

Napier then deserved well of his country for what he had done, and still more for what he had refrained from doing; and this is now generally recognized by all competent naval authorities. But, so far was this from being understood at the time, that he met with nothing but contumely and insult.

CHAPTER XXX

CONTROVERSY WITH THE ADMIRALTY—AGAIN IN PARLIAMENT—THE BALTIC AND ACRE DEBATES—LAST YEARS AND DEATH

NAPIER returned to England a changed man. To the enormous weight of responsibility which he had borne for so many months, had been added, during the past few weeks, the bitter mortification of knowing that, notwithstanding that he had done all that mortal man could do with the means at his disposal, he had failed to satisfy the expectations of his countrymen, taught to look for victories impossible of achievement by ill-informed and irresponsible journalists and bombastic politicians, and—what was infinitely worse—that those in authority, so far from desiring to place the real facts of the Baltic campaign before the nation, were determined to throw the entire responsibility upon his shoulders, and had not scrupled to pervert his despatches and misconstrue his motives, in order to make him the scapegoat of their own shortcomings.

"I met him on landing," writes General Elers Napier, "and was shocked at the great change in his appearance. The last few weeks of persecution had, seemingly, added many years to what was before a hale and vigorous old age. Sir Charles Napier had, indeed, become a completely altered man; and, although he eventually rallied to a certain degree, he never wholly recovered from the effects of those unjust and ungenerous attacks on his professional reputation and character, which nearly broke his proud spirit, undermined his iron constitution, and, no doubt, tended to shorten his days."

On December 18, Napier proceeded to London, and had an interview with Sir James Graham. He had been cautioned by a friend, General Elers Napier tells us, "to keep his temper and fight the devil with his own weapons." But he was of far too impetuous a nature to follow such counsel, and on the 20th he writes to his stepson:

"I have seen Graham, and gave him my mind. —— thinks I have been shamefully treated. I am to see Lord Ellenborough, and I think I shall be down on Friday. My leave is out, and I intend having no communication with them whatever. They want me to throw up my command, but Lord —— advises me to do nothing as yet; he says that is what they want."

And two days later he writes to Mrs. Jodrell:—

". . . I got your letter. My affairs with the Admiralty are too serious to drop; it affects my character as an officer. Edward Ellice has seen all my papers and thinks I have been scandalously treated, and he is a friend of Graham. Ellice advised me to speak to Ellenborough, whom I saw yesterday and am to see to-day; he is a good adviser. I have had a few days' leave, and go home to-morrow, and now let them take the initiative. They want me to resign, but I will not. I asked to come home from Kiel to stand for Marylebone; they told me, if I wanted to come home, I might vacate the command, but that was a trap, had I resigned. Graham is the greatest living ——, and his Board are nonentities. I cannot say when I can come to see you; all depends upon the turn things take, as they will do nothing till Parliament adjourns."

The same day he returned to Portsmouth. At the station he was met by his stepson, who handed him an official letter that had preceded him from London. It was from the Admiralty, and to the following effect:—

"The Baltic fleet, on its return to port, being now dispersed in different harbours of Great Britain, and several of the ships which composed this fleet being under orders for service in the Black Sea and Mediterranean, you are hereby required and directed to strike your flag and come on shore."

In this curt order not a word is said of the services for which Napier had been praised to the verge of fulsomeness before it became convenient for the Admiralty to make him their scapegoat. Though not a ship had been lost in this pioneer campaign in the Baltic, beset as it was with dangers from uncharted rocks and shoals, not a word of thanks was bestowed upon the Admiral, his officers, or men. Yet, in the following year, Admiral Dundas, who had the experience of Napier's campaign to assist him, was warmly thanked for not losing any of his ships, this circumstance being attributed to the "judgment shown in the arrangements and the skill with which the various services have been effected by the officers and men of the respective ships." The officers

and men of Napier's fleet, who had pioneered the way for Dundas's expedition, were ignored. Dundas and his fleet were praised for destroying the arsenal and storehouses in the dockyard of Sweaborg, and for the damage they had inflicted on the enemy storehouses, and so forth; Napier and his fleet received no thanks for the capture and destruction of Bomarsund and for the immense stores of Russian naval material which they had destroyed. Dundas and his fleet were also praised for "maintaining the blockade till the last moment, when our cruisers were driven away by the *early severity* of the weather." Napier's blockading squadron was not even mentioned for maintaining the blockade till the *late severity* of the weather drove them away. The French commanders-in-chief had been highly eulogized by Napoleon III. himself, and promoted; their British colleague was ordered to strike his flag without a word of approbation.

Is it possible, then, to deny that Napier had not only been most unceremoniously dismissed from his command, but negatively condemned for his conduct of the campaign, notwithstanding all the praises he had received up to the beginning of September?

The Admiral at first appeared stunned by the blow he had received, but he soon recovered himself, and, in order to make sure of the position in which he stood, wrote to the Board to inquire if, by their last communication, he was to consider his command at an end:—

"Merchistoun Hall, December 25, 1854.

"I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of their Lordships' orders, directing me to strike my flag; and, with reference to the same, I request their Lordships will inform me whether I am to consider that my command is at an end."

The Admiral, it will be observed, had now returned to Merchistoun Hall, where the greater part of his family were assembled to welcome him. "But," observes his stepson, "it was aught save a 'merry Christmas' that we passed."

Meantime, their lordships had discovered, or it had been pointed out to them, that they had committed an error in omitting to thank Napier for his services, particularly after all the encomiums which his conduct of the operations up to Sep-

tember had elicited from them, and that the personal malice which had dictated their letter was a little too palpable. Accordingly, they hastened to correct it, and on the 26th the Secretary to the Board wrote to the Admiral as follows :—

" With reference to yours of yesterday, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint you that the order which you have received, agreeable to custom, to strike your flag and come on shore, is always the termination of a Flag Officer's command ; and I am directed by my Lords to take this opportunity to express to you the sense their Lordships entertain of your exertions during the period of your service in command of the Baltic fleet."

Thus, the Admiralty still refused to thank Napier for his services, though, when in the Baltic, he had been thanked by them officially, and by the First Lord and Admiral Berkeley privately, over and over again. He was now thanked for his " exertions," while, contrary to all precedent, his officers and men were not thanked at all, notwithstanding their, in some cases, almost superhuman efforts in a sea unknown to a British fleet.

On January 2, 1855, Napier replied to this communication, taking no notice of the thanks for his " exertions " beyond the mere recapitulation of the Admiralty despatch, but stating the services rendered by the Baltic fleet, and expressing his regret that, on account of any dissatisfaction that their lordships might entertain with respect to any part of his own conduct, they should abstain from signifying to the Admirals, officers and seamen lately under his command their grateful sense of these services. He further observed that the French Emperor, in his speech to the Chambers, had paid a just tribute to his fleet, as well as to his army, and recorded a success in the Baltic, in which the British fleet had participated ; whereas the Queen was not advised to advert, in her speech to Parliament, to the services of her Baltic fleet, nor did their lordships now notice them. And he did not fail to point out that the Board's censure upon him for having failed to attack Sweaborg must necessarily include the French Admiral. He concluded a long and exceedingly able letter by demanding a court-martial to investigate his conduct.

" If," he says, " their Lordships should be of opinion that, with the means at our disposal, we ought to have made an attack on Sweaborg,

it is for them to test the correctness of their opinion by submitting my conduct, for not advising it, to the judgment of a court-martial. I repeat, that it would be most gratifying to me there to explain and justify all my proceedings; and I can truly say that, on reflection, I am more satisfied with myself for having resisted the instigations I received to do what I felt to be wrong, than for the various measures in which I succeeded, and for which I had their Lordships' approbation."

A court-martial was, of course, the very last thing which their lordships desired, and in a letter from the Board, dated January 8, the Admiral was informed that "their Lordships had already expressed to him their sense of his exertions during his late command in the Baltic, and no censure had been conveyed on any point requiring further investigation." As regarded the officers of the fleet, those serving under him at Bomarsund whom he had mentioned in his despatches had been promoted, and Captain Watson and his officers had already received the approbation of the Board. This reply appeared to intimate that the services of the other officers and seamen of the fleet were unworthy of mention.

On January 12, Napier again wrote to the Board, pointing out that their lordships had *evaded*, and not replied, to his letter of the 2nd, and again remonstrating on the neglect of any thanks to the fleet. He continues:—

"Their Lordships say no censure has been conveyed on any part of my conduct requiring further investigation. I beg to differ from their Lordships. I will not enter into the fact of Sir James Graham, in his capacity of First Lord, having written to me to begin to withdraw the fleet, and then, in his capacity of one of the Board, reproving me for doing so! The points on which an investigation of my conduct is necessary are, whether I was right or wrong in agreeing with a Marshal of France, a General of Engineers, and a French Admiral in rejecting the impracticable plan of an English Brigadier-General of Engineers for attacking Sweaborg, with which decision the Admiralty have expressed their discontent; and whether the report of my second reconnaissance of Sweaborg deserves the construction their Lordships thought fit to give it, and, indeed, changed the sense and meaning of it altogether, to make out a case against me, at the same time using language to goad me to attack Sweaborg, contrary to my judgment, contrary to the judgment of the French Admiral, and contrary to the judgment of my own Admirals, whom I was ordered to consult. This was to the imminent risk of Her Majesty's fleet."

Then, after driving home several of the arguments which he had used in previous letters to the Admiralty and Sir James

Graham, and exposing in merciless fashion the glaringly inconsistent conduct of the First Lord, he thus concludes :—

" I have now again well weighed and considered this painful subject. I have consulted friends, and I am of opinion, and so are they, that my character has been attacked by the First Lord of the Admiralty, and by the Board ; and, coupling that with my dismissal from the command, I have nothing left but to demand that my conduct be investigated before a court-martial.

" I can quite understand that their Lordships wish to avoid an investigation ; for they are quite aware that my conduct will be proved creditable to me, and very different to their Lordships'."

To this letter he received the following reply :—

" January 13, 1855.

" Having laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your letter of yesterday's date, I am commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you that, although my Lords, upon some occasions, have not been able to express the same satisfaction at receiving your reports which they have directed to be conveyed to you upon others, they have only to repeat that no censure has been passed upon your conduct in reference to the operations of the fleet under your command, and their Lordships have already expressed their sense of your exertions in a manner customary upon intimation that the flag of an officer of your rank has been struck in pursuance of their Lordships' orders. . . .

" My Lords do not feel themselves called upon now to enter a second time into discussion of reports on which they have already stated their opinions, and still less to take cognisance of other informal documents which have never been laid before them, and which they decline to recognize.

" They consider that no inquiry into your conduct is necessary, and they entirely decline to submit a controversy raised by an officer under their orders to the decision of a court-martial.

" My Lords further direct me to inform you that, while they have been *unwilling to pass censure upon any part of your conduct*, they have not failed to observe that, from the moment of your first quitting *Wingo Sound* without orders, and down to the present time, you have repeatedly *thought fit to adopt a tone, in your correspondence with their Lordships, which is not respectful to their authority*. Such a course, if generally adopted by officers, would be destructive to the discipline and injurious to the best interests of the service and is not calculated to inspire confidence in one entrusted with an important command.

" I am further directed to add that this decision is to be considered as final."

It is, indeed, astonishing to find the Board characterizing the letters of Sir James Graham as " informal documents which they

decline to recognize." Were, then, the letters of the First Lord of the Admiralty, as Napier very pertinently inquired, in another communication, dated January 20, to be of force for goading an Admiral on to risk his fleet and yet to be of no authenticity or weight in justification of an injured man?

The Board's statement that the controversy between it and Napier had been raised by the latter is quite incorrect. It was the Admiralty who had raised it, by deliberately misinterpreting his reports.

The Admiralty's reference to Napier having quitted Wingo Sound *without orders* is most unjustifiable, for, as we have shown elsewhere, in leaving the Sound he was only carrying out Lord Clarendon's instructions, transmitted to him by the Admiralty, and their lordships had, in a despatch of April 8, expressed their approval of this movement, although they had a week earlier reproved him for it. The First Lord had also expressed himself "entirely satisfied with his proceedings."

In reference to the charge of the Admiral "having adopted, in his correspondence, a tone not respectful to their Lordships' authority," what officer, it may well be asked, whose reports had been perverted as Napier's had been, would not have made use of strong expressions?

Having failed to obtain redress from the Admiralty, and his demand for a court-martial remaining unheeded, Napier applied to Lord Aberdeen—then Prime Minister—for an investigation into his conduct. Lord Aberdeen replied that, being about to retire from office, he could not accede to his request; and a similar application to the Duke of Newcastle, the Secretary of State for War, was likewise refused, on the plea that the conduct of our fleets was solely under the control of the Board of Admiralty.

On his friend Lord Palmerston becoming Prime Minister, Napier wrote to him, requesting that the documents connected with the Baltic campaign should be laid before the Cabinet; but his letter remained unanswered, although Palmerston had before warmly eulogized his conduct in the Baltic.

Defeated thus in every quarter, but determined, nevertheless, to leave nothing untried to bring about that investigation which should either condemn or clear him in the eyes of his countrymen, he drew up and forwarded a petition to the House

of Commons, " praying that their honourable House would cause an investigation to be made into the conduct of the war in the Baltic, when the fleet was under the orders of their petitioner, and call for such papers as may be necessary to substantiate the inquiry, and make good their petitioner's accusations."

On March 8, 1855, Mr. Malins, Q.C., M.P. for Wallingford, brought Napier's case before the House of Commons, and in a lengthy and very able speech, moved for a copy of any correspondence which had passed between the Board of Admiralty, and any member of Her Majesty's Government, and Sir Charles Napier, since the 20th of December last. A very lively debate followed, in which Sir James Graham, one of those politicians who excel in cloaking their official incapacity under specious arguments, displayed all the dexterity that might have been expected from him, and was supported by Admiral Berkeley, who, though he had continued to pose as a sincere friend of Napier, even after the latter's return to England, now came forward as a resolute defender of the Board of Admiralty. Ultimately, the motion was withdrawn, as the Government asserted that the production of the correspondence called for would be detrimental to the public service.

At the beginning of July, 1855, Sir Charles Wood, who had succeeded Graham as First Lord of the Admiralty, wrote to Napier that he had recommended the Queen to promote him to the highest class of the Bath—G.C.B.—and that Her Majesty had been graciously pleased to approve of this recommendation. The Admiral, however, was of opinion that to accept the honour while his professional reputation was still under a cloud was impossible. He therefore declined it and wrote to the Prince Consort, as Grand Master of the Order, a letter giving his reasons :—

" I have served Her Majesty's family," he writes, " with honour and credit for fifty-five years, and at the end of my career have been grossly insulted, and false interpretations put upon my despatches by the Admiralty, and been degraded and dismissed, because I resented, as became a man of honour, injuries wounding to my character. I demanded a court-martial to investigate my conduct, which was refused, and I do not think I can accept an honour until my character is cleared."

Meanwhile, on April 3, a new fleet had sailed for the Baltic,

under the command of Admiral R. S. Dundas, one of the Lords of the Admiralty.

"The Baltic fleet of this year," observed the *Times*, in a valedictory leading article, "is in all respects much stronger than the last; it has more steam power, more guns, a new class of gunboats and floating-batteries, adapted for creeks and shoals, and—what more than anything marks a resolution to do something—a new commander. . . . The new commander, Admiral Dundas, has before him the services of Admiral Napier, and, whatever his instructions, if any, no doubt he knows that he has to do more than Admiral Napier. If he does not accomplish more, he will certainly find himself next November under orders to lower his flag, with small prospect of ever hoisting it again."

Yes; the *Times*, or rather Mr. Delane, would see to that!

Alas! Dundas was not more fortunate than his predecessor, though his force, combined with that of Admiral Penaud, numbered 101 vessels, mounting over 2,500 guns. After lying off Cronstadt without attempting a hostile movement, the fleets indulged, on August 9 and 10, in an ineffective bombardment of Sweaborg. Many wooden buildings were destroyed, but Dundas himself admitted that the sea defences generally were little injured. Beyond the maintenance of a strict blockade, little else of importance was accomplished, though it was not the fault of Dundas or of his French colleague. They had gunboats and mortars, but not nearly enough of them to destroy the Baltic fortresses. On his return to England, Dundas, instead of being dismissed, was warmly thanked by the Admiralty. But then, it must be remembered, he was a member of the Board.

The very slender results of the Baltic campaign of 1855 opened the eyes of the public, and many who had hitherto been hostile to Napier were now inclined to regard him as a sorely injured man, which he certainly was. In October, 1855, a vacancy occurring in the representation of Southwark, the Admiral was invited to stand by a large body of electors, a subscription being set on foot to defray his expenses.

He accepted the invitation, coming forward as a general supporter of Lord Palmerston, but declining to commit himself to any man or ministry, and was returned at the head of the poll.

As might be expected, the new legislator lost no time in coming to grips with Sir James Graham and Admiral Berkeley on the floor of the House of Commons, and on March 13, 1856, he moved for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the operations of the Baltic fleets of 1854 and 1855. The debate which followed was marked by great acrimony on both sides, and the spectacle of men who had grown grey in the service of their country hurling gibes and insults at one another must have been a painful one to many. The sympathies of the House, however, were very decidedly with Napier, for both Graham and Berkeley left nothing untried to ruin their opponent's professional reputation. Ultimately, Napier having achieved his purpose of publicly ventilating his grievances, asked leave to withdraw his motion.

The debate of March 13 did not, however, terminate the controversy, for in the course of it Graham and Berkeley had, with the worst possible taste, raked up old gossip about the Syrian campaign, the former stating that Napier had advised Sir Robert Stopford not to attack Acre; while Berkeley went further and declared that on the night preceding the attack Napier had told Stopford that if he sent him into the position marked out for him, his ship would not swim for half an hour.

In a letter to the *Times*, Napier gave a categorical denial to both these statements, and this led, on April 4, to what the Admiral termed " a second field-day " in the House of Commons, to which the belligerents came armed for a duel *à outrance*, Berkeley having used his official position to collect evidence from officers who had been present at Acre to support his contentions.

The result was a complete triumph for Napier, though there was a dramatic moment in the debate, when he searched his pockets in vain for the note from Sir Robert Stopford, cited earlier in this volume, exculpating him from censure for his conduct at the attack upon Acre. Happily, he found it at last, and, on reading its contents, the House instantly rang with cheers. He had repelled a most unworthy attack on his professional reputation, and all save his discomfited opponents were unfeignedly glad.

" Well, my dearest Fanny," he writes next day to his daughter, " Sir

James Graham attacked me last night, and brought such a host of evidence that he had selected by putting leading questions to people, that I looked upon myself as ruined. I had just to bring the House round to my side by plain statements, and then I produced Stopford's letters, which I fortunately had, or I should have been lost. The moment I read them I was cheered by the House, and both Graham and Berkeley were attacked by Lindsay, Roebuck and Malins, and they were completely floored; they had only Cowper to say a word for them; the Government even abandoned them. It was a most trying night and ended triumphantly. An honest man has no chance in the House of Commons with such men as Graham, and there are a good many such. I believe Graham is looked upon by every one as a ——."

In the summer of 1856, the war being over, Napier made a voyage to St. Petersburg, partly for the benefit which his health might derive from the change of air and scene, and partly with the object of judging for himself of the actual strength of Cronstadt, and of the possibility of its capture, had he made the attempt two years before. He was most courteously received by his former enemies, and particularly by the Grand Duke Constantine—whom he describes as a frank, open-hearted sailor—and given every facility for inspecting Cronstadt. He found it one of the strongest fortresses in the world, and felt convinced that it would have been madness to have attacked such a place with line-of-battle ships alone, unsupported by gunboats and troops.

His indignation can therefore be imagined when, in the following October, he learned that Sir Robert Peel (a son of the great statesman), and at that time a Junior Lord of the Admiralty, who had accompanied Lord Granville's embassy to Russia, at the coronation of the Emperor Alexander II., had stated, in an after-dinner speech at Stafford, that "he (Sir Robert Peel) had visited the fortress of Cronstadt, and that there was but one opinion, from the Grand Duke Constantine down to the youngest middy on board the *Vladimir*, that had the energy of the commander equalled the pluck of the British Navy, that fortress at the present time would have crumbled in the dust."

The old Admiral would perhaps have done better to have treated this ungenerous attack with contemptuous silence; but his feelings overcame him, and he wrote the young "statesman" a scathing letter. "If," said he, "you have been put forward by the Admiralty to insult me, you have acted an

unworthy part; and if you have put yourself forward, you have acted a foolish one."

It might have been thought that Sir Robert Peel would have had the grace to make some apology or explanation; but, as he did neither, Napier appealed to Lord Palmerston, and inquired whether his lordship had sanctioned this wanton attack, concerning which he demanded an investigation. The Prime Minister, after some delay, replied that there was no occasion for any investigation, "as everybody knew that he had acted with sound judgment in not attacking Cronstadt with the means at his command."

The Admiral also wrote to the Grand Duke Constantine, and the Grand Duke, who appears to have formed a strong liking for the bluff old sailor, replied in a courteous letter, assuring him that he had only spoken to Sir Robert Peel once, and that "not a word concerning Cronstadt—not even the name itself—was mentioned by either of us."

The incident would be scarcely worth recording, did it not illustrate the malice with which the Board of Admiralty continued to pursue the man whom it had so cruelly injured.

On the dissolution of Parliament in March 1857, Napier was again returned for Southwark, and from that time until his death he divided his time between his duties in the House of Commons, where he continued to advocate the interests of his profession, and agricultural pursuits. At the close of that year he suffered an irreparable loss by the death of his wife, who expired at "The Cottage," Shanklin, Isle of Wight,* after a short illness.

On March 6, 1858—on which day he attained his seventy-second year—he was promoted in the course of seniority from Vice-Admiral of the Red to Admiral of the Blue. In the following August, he went to France, with other members of the House of Commons, to be present at the inauguration of opening the port of Cherbourg, on which occasion he was very graciously received by Napoleon III., who, he writes to Mrs. Jodrell, "sent for me, shook hands very kindly, and asked me to accompany him round the yard, which I did for a considerable way."

* "The Cottage" was a pretty little residence, originally a fisherman's cottage, which had been bought by Captain Charles Elers Napier some few years before he was lost in the *Avenger*, and converted into an imitation of a Swiss châlet.

In the summer of 1860, he was unwell, but still persisted in attending to his Parliamentary duties, telling his doctor that he would make a speech which he was very anxious to deliver on the fortifications of our coasts, "even if he died on the boards of the House of Commons." He did make the speech, and it is said to have been the best he ever made.

Shortly after this we find him writing to General Elers Napier, in reply to an invitation to visit him in the Isle of Wight for change of air and scene :—

"August 28, 1860.

"I was not well, and had the doctor not been at hand, I might have been worse. I am now all right. I have had too much work, too little exercise, too late hours, and too little food and drink—so says the doctor. I cannot move till the harvest is over. . . . I am in correspondence with Garibaldi, whose aide-de-camp has been with me. If he can procure two or three well-armed steamers, I will go out and do my best to take the Neapolitan squadron."

The project here mentioned, had he been permitted to carry it out, would, indeed, have been a fitting termination to Napier's career. But that career was now fast drawing to a close.

On October 25, he went to Portsmouth, to spend a couple of days on board the *Asia*, as the guest of his old friend, Captain Gordon, who had been his flag-captain in the Baltic. He returned home on the evening of the 27th, when Rear-Admiral Sir Michael Seymour, his former captain of the Baltic fleet, dined with him. He then appeared to be in his usual health, but on the following day he was taken seriously ill; and, though the doctors at first held out some slight hopes of his recovery, he gradually sank, and between five and six o'clock in the morning of November 6, 1860 he expired in his seventy-fifth year.

During his illness, we are told by one who was present, not the slightest murmur or complaint escaped his lips. His daughter, Mrs. Jodrell, remarking to him how patient and resigned he was, he replied : "When a strong man is down, he must be patient."

"Thus," writes General Elers Napier, "sank at its moorings in harbour, the noble old vessel that had so often weathered the storm, and encountered the enemy's broadsides during the long and eventful voyage of life."

He was buried, by the side of his wife, in Catherington churchyard, about a mile from Merchistoun Hall, and no more appropriate spot could have been chosen for the last resting-place of one of the greatest of British seamen, since it is situated on rising ground and commands a fine view of the Channel, the Solent and Spithead. At the express desire of his daughter, he was borne to the grave by British sailors, whose interests he had always had so much at heart, and who, together with the marines, subsequently showed their gratitude for his untiring efforts on their behalf by erecting a column to his memory at Portsmouth.

THE END

APPENDIX

SIR CHARLES NAPIER AND DELANE

DURING the last years of his life Napier had frequently to defend himself in Parliament and elsewhere against the aspersions of the *Times*, which attacked him with a bitterness which can only be accounted for by personal dislike on the part of its editor, Delane. The old sailor must often have felt tempted to make use of the outrageous letter which Delane had written him on October 4, 1854,* and turn the tables upon his opponent; but he refrained, since he regarded it as a private communication, and that he ought not in honour to make the contents public. Some eighteen months, however, after Napier's death, his only daughter, Mrs. Jodrell (Countess Napier St. Vincent), a lady of considerable literary attainments, to whom the Admiral had bequeathed all his private papers, righteously indignant at the ungenerous references to her father which had appeared in the *Times* of January 23, 1862, in the course of a review of General Elers Napier's "Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.," decided to publish it. She accordingly published, in the form of a brochure, a spirited and most effective answer to the *Times'* review of General Elers Napier's book, in which appeared Delane's letter, and, in juxtaposition to it, the letter written to Napier, during the Baltic campaign, by Lord Dundonald†—whom the reviewer had described as "possessing intellectual calculation and showing rare genius"—in which the famous Admiral speaks of the anxiety he had felt "lest his (Napier's) zeal should induce him to yield his judgment to the notions of the uninitiated," and warmly compliments him on the "perseverance and moral courage" he had shown:

"*To the Editor of the "Times."*

"SIR,

"From the review of Major-General Elers Napier's Memoir of my father, the late Admiral Sir Charles Napier, inserted in your paper of the 23rd of January last, I find your ungenerous

* See p. 360 *supra.* † See p. 333 *supra.*

feelings against the subject of that Memoir had only been slumbering, until, as you thought, the fitting opportunity had arrived for once again attacking his public character. His voice, you well knew, could be heard no more. But let me tell you, he left in the hands of me, *his only child*, records to show that he had served his country faithfully. He left them in my hands, that, in the event of his fair fame being assailed, I should not forget the name I once bore, but produce them in vindication of his character as a public servant. I have no pretension to cope with the power or smartness of your pen, and no desire to make the attempt. Neither have I any right to object, or any intention of objecting, to that review of the work in question, upon the ground that it is not laudatory, either as regards the subject of the Memoir, or the Memoir itself. I have not the presumption to interfere with literary criticism, nor with the right of a public journal fairly to discuss the merits and character of a public man. But I cannot read the review in question—a review for which, under all the circumstances, I feel myself justified in holding you responsible—without seeing that it attempts to *perpetuate a calumny* against my father's conduct of the Baltic Fleet, which you, Sir, the Editor of the *Times* newspaper, were chiefly instrumental in propagating while he lived. When, in that review, you publish this estimate of my father: 'He had not a spark of genius; but he indulged in certain eccentricities which he and his friends mistook for a flickering of the flame,' I feel no disposition to combat a sentiment which is its own best condemnation. But when I find it added: 'In point of fact, *as the event proved*, he was overrated—overrated in the opinion of *the country*, overrated at the Admiralty,' I can neither misunderstand the calumny, nor submit to it in silence. You mean, Sir, that my father did not do his duty to his country, as a British Admiral, while entrusted with the high and most responsible command of Her Majesty's Fleet in the Baltic; and you also insinuate that such came to be, and upon just grounds, the opinion of his country. The same calumny is repeated at the close of the review, in terms yet more offensive and insulting:—

"'After this we may hurry to the closing scene. It is piteous to see the poor old Admiral returning from the Baltic, *sick with the sense of failure*, and of wrong, and looking twenty years older.'

"My father, Sir, did not return sick with the sense of failure—for *he had not failed*. But he was sore under a sense of injustice, chiefly emanating, I suspect, Sir, from yourself, until the people of England readily gave him the opportunity, by returning him to Parliament, of publicly confronting his calumniators. But you, and you alone, still persist in publishing that he did not do

what he might and ought to have done in the Baltic for his country. 'Even *filial piety*,' says your review, 'would not justify the attempt to pass off upon the world, as silver, the decent Britannia metal of which Admiral Napier was formed.' My filial piety prompts me to no such attempt. But you will allow a daughter, and an only child, to say that she can but feel pride in the admission that her father was formed of that *Britannia metal*, which, I believe, is thought of more worth than silver and gold—the iron nerves, namely, and the high heart, which not only successfully resisted the enemies of his country, through a long life of professional distinction, but could and did withstand the pressure of ignorance and presumption, which might have urged him to his ruin. But your oft-repeated calumny, that my father failed to do his duty in the Baltic, is the sole cause of my addressing you now; and I willingly adopt this suggestion which your own review furnishes:—

"'Far be it from us to say, that a correspondence, when it is valuable, should be hid under a bushel—let it be published.'

"Let it be so. I produce the following letter, written, I believe, Sir, by the Editor of the *Times* newspaper, and addressed to my father when commanding, to use the words of your review, in 'that unhappy Baltic campaign.'"

Here follows Delane's letter of October 4, 1854, and that of Lord Dundonald; and the writer concludes:—

"There, Sir, is my reply to your published assertions, published in a journal of world-wide circulation, that my father proved unfit for the command entrusted to him by his Sovereign, a trust sanctioned by the voice of the country, but from which you say he returned a pitiable spectacle of failure and disgrace. It is fit that the antidote should be made as public as the calumny. And I feel assured that none would have maintained the justice of this more strongly than the great Admiral who preceded my father to the grave, one whose involuntary tribute to his abilities, and his hard-earned fame, could have had no reference to that letter of yours, which shows so strangely beside his. The substance of your own letter, in so far as it is injurious to my father's fame, you yourself have made public enough. I can have no hesitation, therefore, in publishing it now, with all the force of its reasons, and in all the fullness of its reprehension, although that form of it may happen to be more damaging to yourself. Whether the injustice my father met with from certain members of the Government was influenced by any such dictation as that with which you insulted and goaded him in the Baltic—what

latent reciprocation of blundering and combination of vicious influence, prompting that letter, may have existed between the Press you so powerfully represent and the Government you so confidently quote, is a question I do not mean to deal with in this form, although it is capable of curious illustration from materials in my possession. But the *very special reasons* which you assigned, in that letter of most mischievous tendency, for so addressing a British Admiral at the most critical period of a command, the responsibility of which cannot be exaggerated, will now enable a generous public to estimate more accurately the value of that insulting opinion with which you still pursue my father in his grave.

" I remain, Sir, your humble Servant,

" FANNY JODRELL.

" Gisleham Rectory, Suffolk,
" March 22, 1862."

On the news of Admiral Napier's death, Portugal put her navy into mourning, and the Portuguese Ambassador addressed the following letter to Mrs. Henry Jodrell :—

" MADAM,

" His Majesty the King of Portugal, my August Sovereign, has ordered me to express to you in his Royal name the profound grief which His Majesty felt at the news of the decease of the illustrious and brave Admiral Sir Charles Napier, Count Cape St. Vincent. His Most Faithful Majesty, wishing, moreover, to give a public and extraordinary testimony of the high consideration in which he held the important services rendered to the cause of the Legitimate Throne and of the Constitutional Institutions of Portugal by the said brave Admiral Count Cape St. Vincent, has ordered the Portuguese Royal Navy to go into mourning for three days. I request you will be pleased to communicate these determinations of His Most Faithful Majesty to the whole of your family, and you may also publish them if you think proper.

" Having fulfilled the wishes of my August Sovereign, permit me, Madam, to avail myself of this opportunity to repeat the expression of my grief and the assurance of the respectful considerations with which I have the honour, etc.,

" LARRADIO."

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